RECOLLECTIONS OF Mrs. HESTER TAFFETAS.

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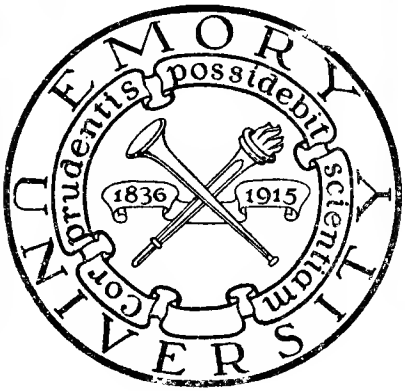

RECOLLECTIONS

OF

MRS. HESTER TAFFETAS,

Court Milliner and Modiste

DURING THE REIGN OF KING GEORGE THE THIRD
AND HIS CONSORT QUEEN CHARLOTTE.

EDITED BY HER GRANDAUGHTER.

THIRD EDITION.

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TRUTH, stranger far than Fiction, may be met
In the deep springs that form Life's mystic well;
Crime, Anguish, Fear, Repentance, Love, Regret,
Have close and curious homes wherein to dwell;
And bridal lace and robes of woven gold
Hide solemn records 'neath their envied fold.

The village gossip often gains more store
Of human facts than sage or scholar can;
That which escapes the wise historian's lore
Is aptly known by serving maid and man;
And mumbling nurses, by the winter's fire,
Could tell the son strange stories of his sire.

Here, in these simple pages, are reveal'd
The secrets Lords and Ladies strove to hide;
Deeds that the doers fain would have conceal'd
With anxious cunning and unbending pride:
And curious things I'll speak in homely style,
If ye but please to listen for awhile.

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RECOLLECTIONS

OF

MRS. HESTER TAFFETAS.

It was just two years after the marriage of the Princess of Mecklenberg Strelitz with King George the Third, which took place in 1761, that I, Hester Taffetas, became, through the sudden death of the kindest of husbands, a widow of twenty years old. I was likewise the mother of a little girl, so delicate and fragile that it has only been by the mercy of Providence that I have reared her: and I had to cast about for the means of obtaining a livelihood for the dear child and myself. Certainly I had a few hundred pounds in hand, but I knew that the money would melt away in no time, and my great object, therefore, was to establish myself in some business which held out a chance of proving remunerative. In these circumstances my thoughts naturally turned to the trade which in early youth

I had been apprenticed to, that of a dress-maker (or mantua-maker, as we were termed in the good old times), which I had given up on my marriage with my dear husband, who was an engraver by trade, and made a good deal of money in his business. Many said at that time, marriage had spoiled a first-rate workwoman; but my dear Richard would have me give it up, and I loved him so much that a hint, much less an absolute desire on his part, was ever sufficient for me to observe.

Now, however, my thoughts could hit on no channel so likely to suit as my old trade; and hearing of a very profitable business in that line —which a lady, herself about to retire, wished to dispose of—I sought after it, and ultimately came into its possession, although at first it seemed likely to be too high in every way for my means, being chiefly among the nobility, and even making for the Court itself. The good-will came to a vast deal more money than I could command; but we got over that difficulty by an agreement on my part to allow a sum out of the business for ten years: and this point satisfactorily settled, I had only to contend with my own inexperience, and fears of not being good enough for the high-born ladies who were likely to honour me with their patronage. However, having a superior forewoman (whom I took with the business), who understood fine ladies and their ways, and what was

proper and what was not, in business connexion with great people,—I soon became more at my ease, though sometimes amidst the turmoils and worries that will beset occasionally the most prosperous life, I envied my forewoman, who earned a handsome income without care or responsibility: but she was a good creature, older than myself by many years, and we lived together till she died, which event took place in her ninety-third year—and, it is a good deal for two women to be able to say, during our lives we never had a fall-out; little miffs, maybe, now and then, for sometimes I was a foolish opinionated young thing, and would have my own way, but in the end I always was obliged to acknowledge Christiana Marcourt to be in the right.

Our business throve, and I prospered so, that many a born gentleman sought me in marriage, no doubt for the sake of my money; but I always thought of little Betsy, and resolved to live true to the memory of her dear, lost father. And at this time, when Betsy's children are growing up about me, and I myself am a very old woman, who may drop into the grave at any moment, I think I may employ myself usefully, as—thank God for His mercy vouchsafed to me throughout a long life—my memory and faculties are almost as clear, and sometimes clearer than in my youth, in setting down some of the strange histories and incidents which I have known: for a fashionable

dress-maker, like a lady's maid, comes in the way of hearing and seeing strange things—and I must say that I was always rather curious about the inner lives of those so far above me in station.

I hope, by doing this, I may in some sort avoid the peevishness of unoccupied old age, and keep myself from being a hindrance to my daughter's family; besides that, taking down what I dictate will improve little Mary in her handwriting, and —as a remote advantage—may perhaps interest another generation. Who knows? So I shall begin with what I remember of the story of "LADY AMBER MAYNE."

Lady Amber Mayne.

Ah! how beautiful were the young girls of my young days. Perhaps it might be a good deal owing to the style of dress, which I shall always think was *piquante* and elegant, notwithstanding little Mary looks at a print of the "Lady's Magazine" for 1777 with grimaces, and exclamations of "What frights!" What is there in the fashion of the modern belle, to compare with the rich petticoat, the looped robe, the flowing sacque, the jaunty lace kerchief, half revealing, half hiding the snowy neck; or the rich Mechlin ruffles (costly enough to last a life but for their fragility), showing off to perfection the polished rounded arm, and adding whiteness to the delicate taper fingers. Even in the tedious head-gear, and the elaborate *coiffure*, there was undoubtedly a dignity and majesty of beauty altogether unknown in the present day. The grandmothers dressed like grandmothers, and did not ape their juveniles; then class had some distinction, and you might tell at a glance the maid from her

mistress. All ranks were not confused in heaps of cheap and gaudy imitations of costly elegance. Every article of feminine attire was good and durable, lasting out sometimes the life of the wearer, but always appropriate to her age, station, and appearance.

And also with regard to female names, there were many pretty simple appellations quite unknown to us in our time. The youngest daughter of the Marchioness of Summerdown was called by one, to my mind, of the quaintest and prettiest—it was "Amber!"—and what a lovely creature she was!

The first time I ever saw her was on the occasion of her coming to our establishment to choose a court dress for her approaching presentation. She had just attained her eighteenth year, and was at that time a great heiress; for though the Summerdown family were never very rich, and not then of much consideration in the great world, on account of the Marquis being lately deceased, and not leaving a son to inherit his honours; yet, a maternal uncle, who had been all his life resident in India, and there amassed one of those fortunes which in later times seem all but fabulous, had recently been good enough to depart from this world, and, out of deference to his sister's high rank, left all his vast wealth to Lady Summerdown's youngest daughter, the beautiful, the accomplished Lady Amber Mayne.

On the occasion I speak of, the young heiress's slight figure was effectually hidden by the Marchioness, a lady of much presence, and who was haughty and pompous; and indeed I knew not that any one was with my Lady Summerdown, until her ladyship desired, in a commanding voice, to see some rose-coloured paduasoys, when one of the sweetest voices I ever heard, said—as if it issued from my lady's crimson sacque—"Let it be blue, dear madam, if you please." "No, Amber," said my lady, "I have made up my mind; it must and shall be *couleur de rose*." "Just what you have looked on, my honoured mamma, all your life."

You must please to remember that in my day and Lady Amber's, phraseology was a little different from the careless talk now in vogue. Young persons then were deferential to their seniors, and parents were only to be approached and spoken to with great reverence and homage. I have doubted sometimes, though, if this enforced state and servility did not, in many natures, produce a disposition to tyrannize, where tyranny could be safely indulged. And perhaps this was the case with Lady Amber, who mingled with her reverence towards her mother a sweet playfulness truly engaging, but who addressed a young gentleman accompanying them in a strikingly different tone. He was one of the most interesting young men I ever beheld. I do not see many

such now;—such a mixture of humility and spirit, of intelligence and modesty. He might have been about six and twenty years old, and his sober and peculiar attire, as well as the way in which the Marchioness addressed him, spoke his condition plainly enough. He was the domestic chaplain. Great families usually had those appendages then; and sometimes, I am sorry to say, they were but a disgrace to their patrons and their cloth. But this young man looked rather as if he were semi-divine, than imbued with the usual faults of his class, which commonly were time-serving and hypocrisy, vices of the meanest order. He happened to differ, when appealed to, from the lovely young lady about some trifle in taste, and she spoke to him with great disdain. He had a kind of hectic flush in his cheek, which deepened when she addressed him. He only looked at her in reply, but such a look! Mercy! it would have melted a stone. But what is the hardness of stone, compared to the heart of a coquette! I was just handing her some tiffany to choose from, when I saw tears fall hot and fast from her eyes. I knew better than to notice her distress; but thought I, "Here is more than meets the sight." When they were ready to depart, he was about to lead my Lady Summerdown to her coach, when Lady Amber, who had dried her tears, and whose eyes looked as bright as if they

had never been dimmed with one, sprang to his side.

"And won't you take me with you, Mr. Arden?" said she. He merely bowed low, and offered her his vacant hand, for it was not the fashion then to take arms.

"Of course, child, he will," said my lady haughtily.

And as they went down the stairs, I heard Lady Amber teazing and rallying him unmercifully. I watched them into the coach. Ah me! they both, after that slight storm, looked radiantly happy. We thought—Christiana and I—what a pair they would have made, if fortune had matched them as well as nature; for his auburn hair, fair skin, and elegant appearance, harmonized well with her clear brunette complexion, tinted with a bright carnation colour—her large glowing black eyes, and sweet fascinating vivacity of manner. * * * * *

What followed I shall not tell as I learned it, which was by bits and scraps afterwards, from the Marchioness, and Lady Amber's own women, and Mrs. Crumb the housekeeper, but as if it had all occurred beneath my own notice. After all, perhaps, if my readers, whoever they may be, expect much of a story, they may feel disappointed; for however I may have felt it at the time, yet when I come to write, I feel much like Corporal Trim in Mr. Sterne's affecting story, when

he says, "Story! God bless your honour, I have none to tell."

By the will of her uncle, Lady Amber became of age at eighteen, and possessor of her great wealth; at which period, her father, the late noble marquis, had been deceased a year. She had always been her mother's favourite; and Lady Summerdown, who was the mother of five daughters, and had married four of them into noble families, looked forward towards achieving the highest matrimonial consequence by means of her youngest daughter's wealth and beauty. But before this, Lady Amber had formed wishes of her own, totally at variance with her mother's previsions. Herbert Arden had lived in the noble family of Summerdown some years. He had been tutor to the only son of that house, who died early, and who had been much attached to his young preceptor. At his son's dying request, the late marquis had nominated Mr. Arden chaplain to his household, though I believe he had a dislike to the admission of such a functionary. Yet the young man's exemplary conduct, his freedom from place-hunting, and his gentle piety, had much commended him to my lord, who was, as I have heard, a very worthy nobleman.

As a girl, Lady Amber Mayne had studied with Herbert Arden. She knew the deep stores of learning which, never vauntingly displayed,

yet existed in him, and which obtained from the noble young lady profound admiration. She had an innate thirst for the well of knowledge herself, and had quaffed pretty deeply, when she found she had not merely learned to admire her teacher, but to love him also. It was the old, old story over again in a fresh phase—the philosopher and his pupil—but in this case pride had a deeper root than love; and Lady Amber's pride was of this persuasion, that although Herbert Arden's family (albeit a reduced one) was of as good blood as her own, yet that her brother's tutor was no match for her.

At that early time she was poor, and, for a nobleman's daughter, well nigh portionless; but when the tide of Indian wealth rolled in at her feet, I am told that her woman heard her exclaim in the privacy of her chamber, "Now true love shall triumph;" as if *true* love ever triumphed. It is too submissive, too fond of sacrificing at the beloved one's shrine, even to dream of triumph. From the time, however, that she became her own mistress, did Lady Amber torture and goad the heart which her woman's instinct told her loved her for herself alone.

Perhaps secret lovers were never more cruelly circumstanced than this young lady and Mr. Arden. He did not dare avow his love, because of her high rank and wealth; she dared not own hers, because a woman would rather let her own

heart eat itself away by sorrow and regret, than seek by words to know the extent of her lover's affection. But she possessed, unhappily, a most contrary spirit: at one time, she would cheerfully have signed away her whole wealth if he would but have acknowledged his regard; at another, if she but fancied she perceived the smallest indication of it, she would bitterly mortify him by her contempt and amazed disdain. Oh! the unworthy spirit of a coquette. Oh! the galling existence of one dependent on a patron's bounty.

It was about this time that she contrived to do deliberately the most cruel thing—cruel, considering her subsequent determination. Among other novelties which Lady Mary Wortley Montague had brought from the East was the system of floral language. Lady Amber insisted on Mr. Arden studying these flowery telegraphs, in order that he might afterwards impart the knowledge to her. It was in vain that he, seeing the danger, and fully aware of the wayward disposition he had to deal with, resisted this wish. All the artillery of her fascinations, her charms, her varied caprices, were brought to bear on this scheme, by which she believed she might convey her mind, without compromising her feminine dignity. At length the Marchioness's aid was enlisted, and Mr. Arden, against his better judgment, complied: who knows?—pleased perhaps to do so in spite of himself.

She was no sooner perfected in this art,—fitter I think for the intriguing East than our English soil,—than she took an opportunity one day—company being present—to gather from the conservatory exactly those blossoms which convey to a lover his mistress's affection; and carelessly presented them to the young chaplain, with "Here, Mr. Arden, accept this for your dinner nosegay." To the rest of those present, these flowers were but sealed books, but to him—he flushed with rapture. What man—young, enthusiastic, and loving like him—would not have done so? Their eyes met—hers fell, unable to bear the wondrous happiness of that glance; but henceforth Herbert, though the furthest from being a coxcomb, believed that he needed not the surety of words to convince him that he was indeed beloved: and he felt a modest happiness in that belief. He had never dared aspire to forget his station, though she had often grievously tempted him to do so. Lady Amber was, he knew, her own mistress, and though her family's opposition might reasonably be feared, yet, what! if she loved him, would not all be well?

Not for a whole fortnight after that eventful crisis could Herbert obtain an interview with this young lady. If he sent to request that favour, she was going to dress, to visit, or a hundred trivial excuses were made. She intentionally deprived him of every opportunity to speak; now

that speaking became as obvious a matter of duty to his fine and sensitive mind, as hitherto he had deemed silence to be.

At last one day, by accident, he found himself alone with her. She became suddenly conscious of their solitude, and rose to quit the room; but he placed himself between the door and his capricious mistress, and closing it, led her by the hand to a settee.

"I know not," he said, "by what adverse fate I have been deprived of your conversation lately, but methinks the dear favour you bestowed on me should not go unacknowledged. You will not deem it presumption, in the humblest of your servants, dear Lady Amber, if he thanks you for that which came as a ray of the blessed sun's beams to some poor prisoner pining for light."

She haughtily declared she knew not what he meant, and challenged him to explain himself. The young man's spirit rose at this treatment. At that moment, he only knew that he was Herbert Arden—a man, honest, unpresuming, and of capacity no way inferior to the proudest. He saw before him a capricious, exacting, and unresponding woman, presuming on her wealth, her rank, and her beauty, and no wonder if his soul rebelled.

"Did not you, Madam, give me these flowers?" he said, opening his vest, and taking them

from the riband which suspended them on his heart.

"A few flowers!" was her exclamation; "what next? If a gift bestowed in courtesy by one whose position"—so she arrogantly phrased it—"entitles her to bestow courtesies, subjects her thus to be reminded of the implication it may be made to bear, she must at least request that her simplest actions may not be distorted."

"The arrangement of these flowers then," he asked, "was it purely accidental? I must have your own assurance of this."

"*Must!* She was not accustomed, he was well aware, to be thus catechized."

"Would she condescend, then, to give the assurance he required, and, if possible, forgive his mad presumption, which only the most devoted love could excuse."

"Well, then, she supposed her late studies had given an accidental interpretation to the stupid things, which might have seemed odd, but—"

The dry and scentless tokens were cast at her feet, and her faint words, as he fled from the room, never reached his ear.

She sat, buried in thought—absorbed in repentant tears for some time, and then rose and left the apartment. Presently, she bethought herself that the poor discarded flowers were on the floor of the room she had quitted She went back for them, but they were gone —she never

saw them again, till she beheld them mingled with dust, kindred to their own.

Such were the strange moods of her mind,—now resolving to sacrifice all to love—and now to repel affection by dignity,—that she continued exercising these varieties of behaviour to him, whenever the arrangements of the family brought him into her presence. At all other times he avoided her. She knew not, though many of her menials did, that anxiety of mind had brought on, in an advanced degree, a pulmonary complaint to which he was liable, and that this severe mental irritation had caused serious symptoms to appear. He was implored by some of the head servants to see a physician, and went secretly to visit one, lest it should alarm her whose peace was only too dear to him.

At this period, though suitors had not previously been wanting, one was evidently particularly encouraged,—a man of rank, who had hitherto received marks of favour only when Herbert Arden was by to see and suffer. She was urged to marry this nobleman, but seemed in no hurry to make up her mind. He, however, was not one who would be trifled with, and soon intimated that her decision must be irrevocable and immediate. He (her suitor) was a man of high fashion, immense influence in the political world —and—she hesitated. As a refinement of cruelty she affected to consult her former tutor. Could

looks have struck her with an eternity of remorse, his would have done so then. Once she was at the point of confessing all—that he was the only man she loved, or could love, or would love. And then the cold and cautious demon whispered, "Think what you will lose—the homage of the world!" As if the world could give one grain of happiness in return for the sacrifices made to it of truth, of justice, of honour.

And so the impulse was lost, and she dismissed her mother's chaplain with so much stately coldness, that he asked himself—"Was I not a vain fool? Can this woman have ever loved?"

In her own dressing-room, meanwhile, there passed such a scene of passion and madness, none about her but her women, that one might have thought she was possessed by an evil spirit. And was she not? If the spirit of a coquette is not diabolical, then demons never walk this earth.

And so did that fine great house hold these two contrary natures; one chafing at itself, and the pomps and vanities that enthralled it—the other, humbled, prayerful, and forgiving.

The news was soon spread; Lady Amber was to be married to His Grace the Duke of Torhampton; and the young lady came soon after to our house to choose wedding clothes. No chaplain on this occasion hung on her accents, or attended her steps. She was more lively than

beseemed, I thought, and yet ever and anon a change came over her, and she would sigh and seem so lost in thought that she knew nothing, saw nothing, heard nothing of aught that passed.

Some lady who accompanied them asked the Marchioness with much concern, "How is poor Mr. Arden?" "Oh! dying, I think," said my lady; "the servants say he neither eats nor sleeps." At these words, a sort of spasm flitted over Lady Amber's face, but she said nothing, only pulled at the lace veil she was examining till it was squeezed into a rag. "I'll take this thing," she said; and then, as if she could bear no more, she went to the window, and taking out her kerchief, wept. Her mother and the titled lady whispered together—"Such a feeling heart. He was the tutor of poor James, and she loved her brother so dearly; it will be like losing him over again." Why did the sixth commandment rise before her eyes, like the writing on Belshazzar's wall—with this difference, that she could decipher too well the characters, "Thou shalt do no murder?" There are more ways, young lady, of slaying, than stabbing with a knife, or giving a cup of poison.

When Lady Amber left our show-rooms her eyes were inflamed with tears, but she persisted, and not only that, but— * * * *

Can it be conceived, what fiend ruled the soul of this young girl? The day before her

appointed nuptials, which were to take place in the private chapel of my Lady Summerdown's Dower House in town, Lady Amber took her woman with her, and drove to the Bishop of C——'s, the prelate who had promised to read the ceremony over the noble pair.

What arguments she made use of I know not, but as it would seem even bishops are not alwa, invulnerable, they must have been powerful ones.

On the wedding day, when all were assembled, waiting only for the reverend father, there came at the last moment a note from that dignitary, regretting that sudden illness prevented him from attending, and expressing a hope—worded more like a command—that his pious young friend Mr. Arden would be his substitute.

He, who pale and attenuated, yet was there striving to maintain his post among the wedding guests, and contending with the desperation of a breaking heart to brave it out, was struck speechless at this request. When, indeed, he could find words, they were used to protest against such a task; why, none of course could imagine—it being obviously his duty. At length Lady Amber herself urged him—"The last request of mine, Mr. Arden." He yielded then; perhaps he felt how terrible would be the revenge she was drawing on herself. He took his place. Those who witnessed the scene said that his face was of the same colour as his surplice. He read

The Maid of Honour.

Of all the fair creatures who thronged round the court of the young queen, the Honourable Sylvia Hazletree was the most admired. She was a young lady of but moderate fortune, and an orphan, but her beauty and manners were of that happy kind, that no one doubted she would make a great marriage. If she had a fault, or more properly speaking a weakness, it existed in the belief that she could attract whoever she pleased; but in truth, while gazing on her excessive beauty, no one could judge her harshly for what was, after all, only a correct estimate of the good gifts of a most bountiful Providence. I have often looked at her till my eyes have been dazzled with her loveliness—what effect, then, must it have produced on the opposite sex? Her fine form was of that just medium, neither too tall nor undersized,—neither too thin, nor *embonpoint;* her complexion so brilliantly fair, that no colours were too bright to match it, and yet utterly removed from insipidity Her large eyes were of a violet purple, fringed with silken

every word slowly and distinctly, till just at the benediction, when some one whispered, "How short Mr. Arden's breath has become."

The bride had her eyes fixed on the ground; and as the bridegroom turned to salute her, Herbert Arden fell heavily to the ground, right between the newly-married pair. They raised him; they tore open the breast of his ruffled shirt: as they did so a little satin packet fell out of his bosom—it contained dead flowers! "Ashes to ashes." Doctors came, but she had done her work effectually—life had departed. No one could mend that broken heart.

* * * * * *

Now you know as much as I do of Lady Amber Mayne's history. I thought, when I saw her go to the "drawing room," on the occasion of her marriage, of what the gentlewoman says in the play Mr. Garrick was so fine in—"I would not have such a heart in my bosom for the dignity of the whole body."

Two years after that, her noble family went into mourning for her. Our house had the order. She had taken laudanum, I believe. There was a great fuss about the coroner's verdict, but it got hushed up somehow; and after all, she received Christian burial, which, though it is a hard thing to say, to my mind was more than she deserved.

black lashes; and her hair of a bright golden hue, never—except on state occasions, when the etiquette was imperative—disfigured with powder, flowed in rich profusion over her neck and shoulders. There was not a weak point in her beauty—hands, arms, feet, all were equally perfect, a delicate Grecian nose, and small intellectual mouth completing her extraordinary attractions. She might well be called the Rose of the Court; and to enhance all these good gifts she was frank, simple, and kind-hearted—generous to a fault, and gay to enchantment. Even the Court atmosphere, dull in its usual routine and trammelled with absurd German etiquettes, could not dim her happy spirits: she had a kind word for the humblest menial, a gracious smile for the most ascetic of the severe dames who undertook the supervision of giddy Court maidens.

When Miss Hazletree was not in waiting, she resided in the house of her guardian Lord Delabore, an aged nobleman, who felt for her the affection of a father, and replenished her purse, whenever, as often happened, the thoughtless maid of honour had too prematurely exhausted its contents. Suitor after suitor offered, but Sylvia had set her mind on attaining the highest possible station a subject could enjoy, and no one seemed grand enough to suit her views.

At this time there arrived on a visit to his august relatives, the Prince of ——, monarch of a petty

German state, whose entire revenue fell short of many a fair lady's pin money or jointure, but who claimed all the observanee of state which the greatest sovereigns demanded,—and what is more, obtained it. He was young, handsome, gifted, and aecomplished; and had scareely beeu a week at the British Court before he began to distinguish Miss Hazletree. She, almost compelled by the etiquette of what was then the strictest court in Europe, to reeeive the prinee's attentions, soon showed her extreme pleasure at their bestowal. Indeed, so marked were they, that Her Majesty, who it was to be presumed understood her illustrious cousin's circumstanees and feelings, more than once interfered, by causing His Highness's devotion to the beautiful Sylvia to be interrupted, and even treated the young lady with that eoldness and disdain by whieh great queens can intimate to little subjeets their disapprobation.

But Miss Hazletree believed herself to be running in the full tide of adulation and sueeess. The prince had hosts of imitators, and she was eompletely besieged by lovers of rank and fortune; and the fair Sylvia soon diseovered that she must have yielded her heart up to her illustrious admirer, even had he not been surrounded by all the aceessories of royal birth and dignities. She had hitherto carefully guarded that heart, but now she had given it irrevoeably. She began to feel uneasy that no definite words had yet been

spoken by her illustrious admirer. It was true that her more experienced associates took care, by hint, inuendo, or open speech, to warn her how these petty German sovereigns were fenced round by the trammels of a conventional and inviolate etiquette; but Sylvia had been taught, and believed with the zeal of a bigot, that great beauty could overcome every obstacle. Besides, she argued to herself, when sometimes her convictions on this point became slightly shaken—her birth, if not noble, was of an ancient and unblemished descent, her connexions were unexceptional,—and, in short, Miss Hazletree felt an innate persuasion that she was destined to be the Princess of ——. She had, too, in spite of her Court education, much confiding trust and inborn simplicity; and in the plenitude of these qualities, she would have utterly refused to credit that a prince and a gentleman could pay attentions, or raise expectations which he never meant to realize. Thus passed balls, receptions, drawing-rooms, and *fêtes*—each one more brilliant than the other; and still no word was uttered to which the heart could cling, or memory repose on for happiness, in absence.

At length a *fête*, crowning in magnificence all that had hitherto been achieved, was given at Frogmore. The gardens, illuminated with numerous devices, were filled with marquees and sylvan bowers. To one of these, the Prince of —— led the beautiful Maid of Honour, after one

of those interminable *cotillons* which just then were the rage among the nobility of Charlotte's court. The soft twilight deepening into night, the perfume of exotics, the dim lustre of the tinted lamps glistening amid the trees, and the plashing of artificial fountains,—all softened Sylvia's usually buoyant spirits, and heightened her beauty with the new and unusual charm of pensiveness. The Prince of —— was but mortal; he could not feel the confiding pressure of that round white arm which seemed clinging to his manly strength for support—could not mark the brilliant eyes glancing with modest tenderness on him, without forgetting to preserve the silence which he believed his only safeguard. He spoke of the burden and state of a Court existence with disgust; said how much he sighed for simple happiness, such as he knew dwelt in some English homes; and intimated that, though freedom of heart was his before he left his father-land, he could not boast so much on his return; finally (for I do not care to dwell much on this part of my story), emboldened by the agitation and evident interest betrayed by Miss Hazletree, he proceeded to explain that, although he was unhappily entirely precluded by his station, and its inexorable duties, from marriage with any, save one of royal blood, yet he had it in his power to offer his protection, love inextinguishable, and a truly devoted heart.

Poor Sylvia! bred in a Court, she was not such

a novice as to be unaware that these disreputable arrangements were often resorted to among the German royalties, and that many women of station pretended to consider them a sufficient salvo for the loss of an honourable name. She had heard of these wicked doings among princes and fine ladies, and listened with as much contempt as surprise at such fallible sophistry; but that any magnate should have dared to offer to her, Sylvia Hazletree, daughter of an unblemished race, dating from the Conqueror, such an indignity, revolting to her alike as an Englishwoman, a woman of virtue, and a woman who loved tenderly, was killing indeed;—yet she answered not a word. Her downfall was great, so was her agony.

The Prince, not understanding that shrinking delicacy which causes Englishwomen to regard an attack of this nature as detracting from their own self-respect—inasmuch as one cannot touch a butterfly, without its losing some of its exquisite plumage—could not understand Sylvia's blanched cheek and strange emotion. She raised her eyes to him when he implored an answer, and then—he read the whole at one glance. He was about to take her hand, to expostulate, to beseech; but she returned and fled fast—until, breathless and pale, she reached the privacy of her own chamber. Her woman came in an hour after, by the merest chance, and found her mistress in all the horrors of uncontrollable hysterics. She was undressed and

put to bed; but not till the morning light shone in at her chamber, and the music, the lights, and the dancers were hushed and gone, did the unhappy girl, exhausted by the violence of her sufferings, sink into insensibility.

* * * * *

The pang was indeed fearful. Sylvia Hazletree, unlike many of those fluttering court beauties, had a heart, and a keen, quick sense of honour; both had been wronged irremediably. The Prince of —— sued, some days after the fête at Frogmore, for a private interview, but she denied it. He then requested to see her before his departure from England, which he intimated would be immediate and final; then, not without many tears and much trembling, Miss Hazletree sent him the following lines—which I may mention here, after his own death, were found carefully preserved in his private escritoire:—

"I know not in what particular I was unfortunate enough to incur the light opinion of your Highness; but this I know, that death only can efface the memory of the injury inflicted on me by the degradation you offered. That you may soon forget the pangs of an upbraiding conscience, is the prayer of

"Your Highness's

"Humble servant,

"Sylvia Hazletree."

When the Prince left England, Miss Hazletree once more appeared in public; not the Sylvia of former days though, but a pale, joyless creature, the phantom of her former self. But very soon her office was given up; her health was so wretchedly shaken, and sank so visibly, that the Queen, who doubtless saw and understood the whole, kindly, and unasked, granted her permission to retire; for it was a difficult matter in those days to resign court appointments without incurring the displeasure of the sovereign.

So Miss Hazletree returned to her guardian's house. Pity she had ever left it. She was taken about from one place to another, but with no good effect. She wasted and declined hourly; and when at Hastings, with the restlessness of her disorder, insisted on returning home. She was always asking for letters, and appeared for ever expecting that her false lover would repent, and repair her wrongs by a late atonement. Alas! nothing was further from his thoughts. Perish hearts, feelings, sentiments, all, rather than that the dignity of a small insignificant principality should be lowered in the eyes of the world. Such was the man to whom this young trusting Englishwoman—forgetting that chivalry, and its vow never to injure woman, were things of by-gone days—had yielded the treasure of a pure, though too ambitious heart.

When Miss Hazletree arrived in town I was desired to wait on her immediately. She had taken

the fancy—so common, in those dying of her complaint—that she was getting rapidly well, and therefore needed new clothes, than which there can perhaps be no surer token of impending dissolution.

I found her lying on a settee in her dressing-room, propped up by pillows, and dressed with that exquisite care which, from habit I suppose, she retained to the very last. She wore a white *negligée* trimmed with the richest lace, and her golden hair was restrained in its luxuriance by a riband of the palest azure. Thin and worn as she was, perhaps her loveliness had never been so touching.

"Oh, my dear good Taffetas," she cried with a tone of her old sweet vivacity, "I am so glad you are come. I positively have nothing in the world fit to wear, and Her Royal Highness the Princess Amelia has sent to say that she will do me the honour of a visit."

I may just observe here, that the illustrious lady mentioned by Miss Hazletree was Amelia Sophia, the second daughter of George the Second; once deservedly famous for strong intellectual powers, for accomplishments and beauty, but who then, alas! though not much past fifty, had degenerated into an inquisitive, gossiping old maid, as remarkable for a masculine and forbidding appearance, as in youth for her beauty. A great lover of horses, and passing much of her time in her stables, Her

Royal Highness's manners approximated strongly to those of her grooms and equeries. Her own usual attire was a round hat and extremely shabby riding habit. I therefore hinted, that the Princess not being very particular in her own toilette, would excuse doubtless all deficiencies in others.

"True," she said; "but she loves to see every one neat about her, despite her own oddities: besides, I feel so much better since my return to town, that I mean to go out and about. "They shall not," she said in a low voice to herself, but audible enough to me, who was just then stooping to pick up some fallen lace—"they shall not say I am dying of a broken heart, through disappointed love or vanity.—Make me two suits, dear Mistress Taffetas," she added in her usual tone; "one to visit in—blue and silver; and one to ride out in—Freneh grey, I think, with white trimmings."

I received her orders, made my obeisance, and departed; and I remember well saying to Christiana Marcourt, when I got home, "You must make great haste with Miss Hazletree's clothes, or, poor dear young lady, she will be dead before they are finished."

She never lived to wear them, though they were done out of hand direetly, and sent home.

When the Prineess Amelia visited Miss Hazletree, which visit to this day I believe was from any motive but a kind one, Her Royal Highness had the inhumanity to pull out of her eapacious

pocket a foreign gazette, containing a full account of the marriage of the Prince of —— to a Russian Princess of the imperial blood; but who, as Sylvia well knew from certain Court chronicles, was ordinary in her person, and imbecile in her mind. The poor girl bore it heroically while the eye of the scandal-loving and spiteful Amelia was upon her; but after Her Royal Highness's departure, Sylvia fell into strong convulsions, and continued in them until nature, worn out with contending, gave way; and utterly exhausted, Sylvia Hazletree, in the possession of youth, incomparable beauty, and fair earthly prospects, yielded up her too sanguine spirit, and has found, I humbly trust and believe, in holier spheres, the happiness denied her here.

Peace to her memory! No one can recall an unkind word or look from her during the whole course of her brief three and twenty years. Would that we could all lay that flattering unction to our souls,—that we never gave cause of sorrow to a human being.

The Changeling.

WHAT a splendid wedding was that of Dorinda, Countess of Leverglen, expected to be! Just twenty-one, and come (though, alas, by the death of a loving father) into possession of her title and fortune. The former would have been extinct, as the late Earl left no male heir, but, in consideration of important services rendered by him to the state, His Majesty was pleased to decide that Lady Dorinda, the Earl's only child, should retain and enjoy the full rank of her progenitor. The young lady had beauty enough to have drawn scores of the young nobility to her feet; but her selection had been made, and she was about to be wedded to one of the handsomest and most fastidious of our English nobility (Charles, Marquis of Willsbury): her earthly felicity seemed, indeed, assured and perfect. Perhaps her style of beauty might not have suited every taste; it was of a regal kind—tall and commanding in figure, with the height of a Juno, fine features, and the full bright colour of youth and perfect health. Added to these gifts, a grace and majesty which spoke of

association with courts and courtly people all her life pervaded her slightest action, and even her great pride—however evil pride doubtless is in the sight of One, before whom the best and noblest are but dust—in a worldly point of view, sat on Lady Leverglen, not amiss, if only in the fire it lent her eyes, and the dignity it imparted to her mien.

The marriage of this young lady was to take place as soon as possible, and finely the dress-makers and jewellers were hurried to array the noble bride in time.

The dowager Lady Leverglen doted on her daughter, though, personally, so little resemblance existed between them, that few could have supposed they were mother and child, unless previously aware of the fact; Lady Leverglen, the dowager, being short and slight, and even in her youth could never have boasted much beauty. The late lord himself, I believe, was anything but a handsome man, therefore both parents rejoiced exceedingly in their daughter's queenly and surpassing charms.

The young Lady Dorinda's mother, having been unable to nurse this, her only child, to her own great regret, had been obliged to confide the infant to the care of a nurse, with whom she was left in Wales, till at two years old she was restored to her doting parents, an infantine model of health and beauty. A pension had been settled on the Welsh nurse, who came frequently

to London to visit her foster-child, until her visits becoming tiresome and inconvenient, Lord Leverglen, from whom his daughter seemed to inherit her great pride, forbade her future coming. Some of the old servants of the family,—and be sure old servants notice everything,—who remember Gwynneth Apreece, say that her brow darkened and she scowled angrily in my lord's face when he told her this, and said that one day or other he should rue his barbarity; but it had no effect, except to give additional force to his determination: so Mrs. Apreece, at that time a woman past forty years of age, went away heaping curses in Welsh on the earl and his tyranny, as she chose to call it; and, indeed, I cannot help thinking it did seem behaving hardly to the poor woman—foster-mothers often having the tenderest affection for the children whom they have nourished at their bosoms. Perhaps she was even more exasperated and mortified at the indifference of the child, who even then put up its little hands to push her, and said in its baby accents, "Dow away, dow away!" But she never came to my lord's grand mansion in Piccadilly any more; and indeed, they ceased to hear anything of her for years, except that she still lived, and took her pension, which was paid her through the medium of a solicitor in the Welsh town nearest the remote village where Mrs. Apreece resided.

Lady Dorinda, I believe, had entirely forgotten

her old nurse; or if she ever thought about her, was satisfied with the reflection that her years of infirmity and old age were provided for. As to affection, she would have smiled in contempt at the thought of such a feeling subsisting between the Countess of Leverglen and an old Welsh woman of low degree, merely because that said woman had had the honour of nursing her.

Oh, human pride! how many, many shapes, Proteus-like, thou canst assume!—now wearing the garb of charity; then vain of silken robes and trappings, spun by a worm like thyself· anon rejoicing and holding aloft thy head, because it is decked with bright and coloured stones, whose value is fictitious; or puffed up, it may be, because old chronicles tell that in the reign of the first William, thy remote progenitor was known to be an unscrupulous Norman adventurer, graced by the tyrant with the title of baron, in reward maybe for some sanguinary deed; or exulting in an abundance of wealth, scraped not together by thyself even, or—— But no wonder thou hast ascendancy over the souls of mortals, when thy promptings caused the downfall of angels.

Lady Leverglen's was but the baser sort of pride, I fancy; for such high positions imbue really great minds with extra affability and gentleness towards inferiors in station.

So the last stitch was put into the wedding gown,—a white satin sacque and tiffany petticoat,

I remember it to have been, and most richly embroidered with roses,—and the last stroke of the pen was added to the settlements by which her title and possessions were to enrich the already overflowing coffers of the house of Willsbury. Proudly, and with almost the condescension of a sovereign, did Lady Leverglen receive her noble friends' congratulations; and at length the important morning was ushered in—portentous omen!—by a louring, leaden canopy of sky that seemed momentarily about to deluge London with a fit of atmospheric weeping. It kept off, however, this threatening rain; and at eleven o'clock the carriages almost blocked up Piccadilly. The ceremonial was fixed to take place in St. James's Church, and a dean was there to unite the happy pair. There were dukes, countesses, earls, and even royalty nearly related to the throne, to grace the auspicious union of mutual rank and wealth; with the additional felicity that Hymen at this altar was kept in countenance by Cupid.

I had been in waiting at the bride's dressing, to give the last touch to her attire, and afterwards proceeded on foot to the church to see the ceremony. I remarked, I believe, to Mrs. Pomander, the young Countess's own woman, how dull and oppressed my lady seemed; and she answered that it was no wonder, seeing that she had been compelled to sit up all night to preserve her "head," after it had been under the

hands of M. Coiffère, the celebrated French hair-dresser. Ah! dear me, what we underwent for fashion's sake in those days, no one would believe now, only that it has become matter of history.

But to return to the wedding, a grand one even in times when every wedding was made a matter of show and expense, even if the principal persons were of humble rank. There was a rare crowd about the church door, and the beadles in their gold-lace coats, and gold-headed sticks, had enough to do to keep order. Such a procession of rank and beauty filed off into that church! I felt not a little pride, I assure you, when I reflected that I had superintended the costumes of nearly all there; for to have the custom of the Court was to have all the flock of the *ton* follow, and we had our own prices too, I'll assure you.

There were rich satins and feathers, flowers, tiffany, and lace, with pearls and diamonds, in great profusion, as if to atone for the sun's absence; and after a while, the splendid crowd having arranged itself into order, a deep solemnity pervaded the church, and the dean began the service. He had read the opening exhortation, and came to that awful adjuration—"I require and charge ye both (as ye will answer at the dreadful day of judgment, when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed) that if either of you know of any impediment why ye may not be lawfully joined together in holy matrimony, ye

do now confess it; for be ye well assured, that so many as are coupled together otherwise than God's word doth allow, are not joined together by God, neither is their matrimony lawful."

As the dean slowly and impressively uttered the last word, there arose amidst the breathless silence in the church, a strong, deep, yet slightly tremulous voice—"I forbid this marriage!" Every one turned round to look for the intruder, and there was a pause, terrible for the short time it lasted,—while each one asked himself if it were not a dream, or a trick of the imagination.

The dean, who of course had discontinued reading, at length broke the spell by demanding—"What impediment exists?" then a woman, tall, bony, and hard featured, looking like one who had been accustomed to wind and weather, and toil, yet bearing traces of much beauty possessed in youth, came forward. There was a good deal of shrinking among the dainty court dames, as this old, coarsely-clad, homely person advanced towards the altar.

She looked round at the grand company with a wondering and strange expression. "She is mad," said the dowager Lady Leverglen, who was well nigh fainting with terror, and whom—her ladyship being much addicted to hysterics—I expected every minute to go off screaming. She reserved them, however, until there was more leisure; then I remember we could scarcely control her.—"She is mad," said the dowager.

"It would be a good thing for you and myself, my lady, if I were mad," said the old woman, with a lowly reverence. "But I am not; only a sinner, my lady—a great sinner," she cried, throwing her arms up wildly over her head, and looking, I thought, like some necromantic crone, or one of the weird sisters in "Macbeth."

"Speak, woman!" said the dean; "though how you gained admission here among this company, I know not—there must have been strange neglect," and his reverence looked severely at the gaping officials who were leisurely surveying this singular scene. "Speak, I say," he continued, "and say why and wherefore you have dared to interrupt the ceremonial of marriage between these noble persons."

"Just because, please your Reverence, or your Grace, as the case may be," said the confused woman, "for I don't presume to understand the dress of high church, being myself of the fold of the Reverend Jonas Carnaby of ——"

"Silence," said the dean. "Keep to the subject. Your own objection?"

"Just this,—that yonder fair bride is not what she seems."

Here there was a general exclamation of surprise, and a universal demand to know what was meant. The bride, as white as her own sacque, was supported by the bridegroom, who looked—poor man—hot and bewildered.

The old woman faced her excited questioners, and looked, to my thinking, like an old lioness at bay. She answered them: "This—that your fine young bride there, is no countess; she was changed at nurse. I was the nurse: I ought to know my own child, and I am her mother! And now, my lord the bridegroom, you can marry as fast as you please. I, for one, have no objection to my own flesh and blood being made a lady in earnest. Only mind, I have confessed my crime—saved, saved my precious soul," she said, again flinging her arms aloft.

"Take her into the vestry," said the dean. "I cannot, my Lord Willsbury, proceed with the ceremony, until this curious matter be cleared up." He was interrupted by the bride fainting. And there she lay, cold and white as the orange blossoms in her hair. She was laid on a heap of pew-cushions in the vestry, where the friends of the family adjourned. The guests were politely requested to disperse, for there seemed no chance of the marriage taking place that day. Constables were called, and the strange woman was given into their charge. The company departed, to spread this astonishing affair over the town, affording the fashionable world food for gossip many a day after.

It turned out to be too true. The Welsh woman being examined strictly, the facts came out too certainly. It seems that the first thing

that put the temptation in her head, was the fact that the real heiress of the Leverglens had taken the small-pox, and was so cruelly disfigured, that the nurse dreaded taking her home to my lady, whom she knew to have an earnest wish that her little daughter might grow up a beauty.

"There was my own girl," said Gwynneth Apreece, "a perfect picture—healthy, pretty, and full of spirit. The thought came across my mind, how the poor, defaced baby would be looked down on by her grand relations, and how no wealth, or being called "my lady," could ever make up to her for the scorn her ugliness would bring upon her; and then I thought how well my beautiful Polly would become a title; and so the evil one kept on whispering in my ear and my heart, till I persuaded myself it was the best thing I could do. It was the wish to see my own darling, and not be forgotten by her, that made me take many a journey from Wales; and then I got abused by my lord, and it was a great sorrow to my poor heart to think I was not allowed to see my own child. My Polly, too, came to forget me, and beat me away with her tiny hands, and made faces at me with her pretty mouth. I was very wroth at that, for I loved my girl, and even now nothing but the sense of my great sin would have made me tell the truth. But I have been converted lately; and I could not die with such a weight on my soul. Besides,

it is hard for a child to look down on the mother that gave her birth—and, in short, I could bear it no longer."

Such was Gwynneth Apreece's statement, sworn to on the Holy Bible before a magistrate; and the strong likeness—allowing for age, hardship, and poverty—between Gwynneth and the unfortunate girl whom she thus inopportunely claimed, was indeed strong presumptive evidence.

Lawyers were employed; for poor Lady Leverglen's heart and hopes were centred in her who had been brought up as the heiress of her house; and her sympathies and prefcrences alike revolted from the young woman who—positively ugly and ignorant, as well as rustic in her manner and conversation—had been fetched up from Wales to be introduced—poor thing!—to a title and a fortune. And here again the truth was painfully apparent. Through all the disfigurement of the small-pox the resemblance to her parents Lord and Lady Leverglen was plainly visible. The desire of revenge on the Leverglen family, for repulsing her from the house, was at first supposed to be the cause of this untimely revelation of Mrs. Apreece's; but in the course of the law proceedings, the old woman was taken ill in London, and was evidently arrested by the stern hand of death. In her last moments, she made a request to see the dowager Lady Leverglen, the lawyers,

the Marquis of Willsbury, and the two young women; but she who has hitherto in this narrative been called the Countess of Leverglen, refused to come.

"Never mind," said Gwynneth; "we shall soon meet where she *must* come."

She reiterated her statements on oath, made still more sacred by its being her dying one; and soon afterwards expired.

And she, to whose pride this crushing blow had arrived, for a long time would not believe in the truth of the dreadful discovery. What! she, —the delicately bred, the refined, the beautiful, made of that common clay which formed poor Welsh peasants? Impossible! She shut herself up in her chamber, and became more haughty and imperious than ever. Lady Leverglen, who was well nigh distracted, came every day and sat by her, and soothed her awhile with flattering hopes and promises; but the defection of my Lord Willsbury, who had never recovered from the shame and disgrace of his wedding morning, affected her too powerfully for any consolation to be of service. It was in vain to represent, that if his affection was for her wealth and state, instead of herself, it was well that she had discovered her mistake. She would not acknowledge anything to be well that involved the loss of worldly homage. Neither was it of any avail to urge that her charms and accomplishments, being purely personal, no

stroke of fortune could deprive her of them. "Of what use were they," she would impatiently ask, "in poverty and disgrace?" Lady Leverglen, totally at a loss how to console her, answered that in the worst case an allowance should be hers to live like a gentlewoman.

"I thank you, madam," she replied, her eyes flashing rays of scorn; "and I have doubtless your consent to marry the chaplain, or the hairdresser, or any one who will take the worthless, disgraced changeling."

Then her mood would alter, and she would fling her arms round my lady's neck, and crave indulgence, and passionately implore her to strive to remember some mark or sign by which she could be identified as the true daughter of a Leverglen; and these things went on till Gwynneth's death and final declaration, which there was no getting over. Lady Leverglen was then compelled to say she would receive the real heiress as her daughter, and to intimate to Dorinda—or Polly, as she had been christened—that she must depart to a retreat in the country until her feelings softened. My Lady Leverglen said she would gladly receive her as a companion whom she had learned to regard as a daughter. Mrs. Pomander told me, that to her dying day she should never forget the look of the *ci-devant* countess, when my lady said that; but she only answered with—"Certainly, madam, you are too

good; you shall be obeyed in every circumstance;" and turned round on her bed, and buried her face in the pillows, as if she wished no further discourse: so my Lady Leverglen, who was almost heart-broken herself, left the room, and some hours after, the invalid complained to Mrs. Pomander of a racking pain in her shoulder.

"It is only a cold you have caught, madam," said the woman, who vowed she knew not how to term her mistress.

"I suppose so," was the answer. "Send, Pomander, for some laudanum to rub it with."

The laudanum was got from the apothecary's, and the shoulder was well rubbed with the lotion, and then Mrs. Pomander took her leave for the night.

"Leave the bottle," said her mistress, "on the toilette, lest this terrible pain returns." The woman did so.

When Mrs. Pomander drew her young lady's curtains next morning, there she lay in the stillness of death. Alas! alas! it was a death self-inflicted—the haughty and impatient spirit had dared to rush into the presence of its Creator, not in humiliation and prayer, but in desperation and anger. He who is more merciful than the most merciful of His frail judging creatures, had, it is to be humbly trusted, pity on her weakness and rash madness. The laudanum bottle was half empty—she had swallowed enough to kill a strong man.

She was buried in the church-yard, through which, a few weeks before, she had been led to become a bride. Lady Levcrglen, the dowager, did not live long after her. The uncouth and ignorant Countess became a great devotee, under the guidance of the Reverend Jonas Carnaby, who had converted her foster-mother. She brought him up to town, and built for him a chapel, which yet exists under her name. I have seen a picture of her, an old engraving, in which she is represented as standing by a tomb, under a funeral cypress, with gloom and more cypresses in the distance. I can safely say, a plainer or more disagreeable-looking woman it never fell to my lot to behold, though of course, poor soul, she could not help that; but I greatly doubt if a more cheerful religion would not have made her look more comely.

Such is the true and sad story, found in the history of the proud family of Leverglen.

The Wild White Rose.

THE particulars of the early part of this narrative I have frequently heard from my late dear mother; the chief subject of it I afterwards met, through her coming to our house to be measured for suits, and great pleasure I had in serving a lady whose early history had formed one of the most pleasing of my recreations, when an apprentice to Mistress Chipp, the famous milliner. I used to visit home sometimes, and sit at my sewing; while my mother, darning the family stockings, which mostly lay in a great heap in a large basket, would tell some of the strange stories she heard in her visits to her customers, for she was a monthly-nurse—a personage in that day of great state and consideration; and I think it was while in attendance on my lady Primrose's eldest daughter that she heard the following, which was much talked of in London at the time.

It was one evening in the year 1749, his Majesty George the Second being then alive and hearty, that my Lady Primrose gave a grand card

party. Now it was pretty well known that her Ladyship had a strong Jacobite tendency. For that reason, I suppose, she had been so ill received at court, that of late years she had not troubled St. James's with her presence. Being, however, intimate with the Prince of Wales and the Princess, and on visiting terms at Leicester House, she had a great connexion amongst those adherents to the House of Hanover, who regarded more the sun about to rise, than that likely to set in the course of a very few years.

My Lady Primrose, then, passed for a staunch Hanoverian like the rest, regardless of the treasonable fact that the picture of the young Pretender, as his enemies called him, was conspicuous over her dining-room fireplace. She was enjoying her game this night exceedingly, seeing that her opponent's partner, a purblind dowager, had revoked twice; when the room door was thrown wide open, and the Major Domo announced the Count du Voisin, and his daughter the Countess. Lady Primrose not recognising the title, and puzzled to think who these inopportune foreign friends might be, rose from her seat, and, amid the profusion of ceremonies and introductions then the mode, to her surprise and horror recognised Prince Charles Edward Stuart. He was accompanied by a little girl of seven years old, of most delicate beauty. My Lady told her woman afterwards, that so much was she terrified and

flurried at this unexpected presence, that though she had just sorted her cards which she had in her hand, she nearly dropped them in her fright, thereby running the risk of losing the rubber, which was going in her favour. However, being a woman of great presence of mind, she welcomed the Count du Voisin, while bursting with curiosity to learn what could thus have made him venture into the heart of the enemy's domain. Alas! among all his ill-devised schemes, this last was about the most foolish conceivable. The little girl, whom he called Amabel, he introduced as Mademoiselle his daughter; and she being confided to the care of Lady Primrose's woman, the Count du Voisin mingled with the guests, and partook freely of the sack and canary wine on the refreshment tables; besides calling for a glass of strong waters. My Lady Primrose was on thorns, as she declared, till the company retired; which at last they did, apparently without suspicion; and then, being left alone, hours were spent in conversation. The Prince declined, however, with more generosity than was his usual wont, to compromise his hostess; he merely requested her to shelter his little girl, whom he stated to be truly his daughter, and hinted with some reserve and mystery at his private marriage with her mother—a foreign lady of high rank—who had lately died, and whose intimate connexion with himself was unsuspected by her family.

The child had hitherto been brought up in a

convent, where Lady Primrose, in her secret soul, thought it would have been quite as well to have left her. But Charles Edward Stuart partook largely of the want of caution and foresight common to his unhappy family. He had been seized, on hearing of the mother's death, with a fit of sudden tenderness for the child; took her away from her kind protectors, the good nuns; and now found her an embarrassment to him. No matter; what so easy as to saddle his friends with the care of the poor child! So my Lady Primrose, somewhat to her chagrin, was selected to prove his confiding friendship; and assured of his request being law, he took his leave, purporting to call again. The little girl next day, indeed, endeared herself to the whole household, by her beauty and winning ways. She had nothing with her but the travelling suit in which she had left the convent, and my Lady was obliged to get her some clothes. Poor child! she knew not the dangerous position of her father, nor that he was anything more than a private gentleman, which indeed would have been better for him had such been the case. His great recklessness on this occasion gave much alarm to Lady Primrose, and others of his adherents. He took lodgings in Pall-mall, and constantly gave audience to his friends and partisans, and declared if four thousand men could be raised he would immediately place himself at their head.

It was reported that King George himself knew of this visit; but at any rate His Majesty treated the matter with indifference, saying to my Lord Holdernesse, "My Lord, when he is tired of England he will go abroad again." The fact was, that some of Lady Primrose's servants had observed that the visitor of their Lady bore a strong resemblance to the Pretender's portrait, and so noised it abroad. His plans were terribly ill-advised; and the sale in London, at that time, of plaster busts of the prince, very strongly resembling him, increased his danger.

Among other wild schemes, he had a plot to seize the king, when His Majesty was returning from the theatre, by means of a body of Irish chairmen, who were to attack the royal servants, extinguish the lights, and excite confusion; while the conspirators bore His Majesty off to the continent. This intention, however, though considered far from impracticable, was abandoned, the members of the party not being able to agree among themselves. The Prince stayed altogether only five days in London, and with the exception of a second visit to Lady Primrose, when her Ladyship introduced him to Dr. King, he never again saw the young Amabel; for soon after that occasion, walking in Hyde Park one day, he was met by a person rash and unthinking as himself, who openly knelt down and saluted him as King of England. This so alarmed both him and his

friends, that a boat was hired and he was forthwith carried over to France.

And so poor little Amabel remained dependent on the bounty of my Lady Primrose, who durst not compromise her own safety by writing to the Prince.

The little girl was a most endearing child, and her beauty of that delicate order, that she received, partly from the purity of her complexion, and partly from her birth and the emblem of her father's adherents, the name of "The Wild White Rose;" and presently my Lady grew so fond of her, that she was quite content to keep her, which, unless she had turned the poor child out in the streets, she was like to do, for her father took no notice of her, nor sent to inquire about her. Lady Primrose, who never would allow that any of the Stuarts could do wrong, said, "that being so young a man, he must be excused for forgetting in his anxieties and trouble, to think about a little child;" but as he was twenty-nine years of age, I think he was quite old enough to have known that it was not proper to abandon his little daughter to strangers.

Poor thing! my Lady spent a deal of money, though, on her education, and used often to take her to Leicester House to play with the young Princess Augusta, a girl a good deal older than Amabel; but children remained children much longer then; and the young Princess still took great delight in her doll, or battledore and shuttlecock. This

society helped to form Amabel's manners, and at seventeen she was a rare and accomplished girl.

But my Lady, who was growing old, became sorely puzzled what to do with her. Having no fortune, it was scarcely to be expected that she should marry a gentleman; and first the chaplain was thought of, then this person, now that, only Amabel would have none of them. People did say that the young King was wonderfully taken with her, and that the Princess Dowager of Wales was very cool in consequence to my Lady Primrose, who took her protégé everywhere with her. So at last Mademoiselle du Voisin, as she was called, declined going into company at all, for she had no hankering after royalty, more especially my Lady having imbued the young thing with her own Jacobinical notions, thereby causing Amabel to look on the reigning family with no great veneration. She remained at home, therefore, tending Lady Primrose gratefully and affectionately. One evening my Lady, feeling better than she had been for some time past, desired to take Mademoiselle to the play; so after some resistance on her part it was agreed on, and her Ladyship's coach ordered. The ladies stepped into it, were taken to the Haymarket Theatre, saw the play, and returned home; but just before they arrived at Lady Primrose's house, which was near Tyburn, the horses were stopped, and the coach door opened by two men with crape over their faces.

who lifted Mademoiselle out in spite of her shrieks, and the cries and threats of Lady Primrose. They would have carried Amabel off, having a chaise waiting hard by; but a young gentleman coming up just then with two serving men behind him, Mademoiselle called on them for help, and a desperate encounter took place, in which the ruffians were worsted and put to flight. The coachman and footman, who had been bound, were unloosed; and the young gentleman, whose name, it appeared, was Lord Monehan, escorted the ladies home; and indeed, Lady Primrose would on no account part with him till he had partaken of supper. Amabel called him her preserver; and certainly she owed him a large debt of gratitude, for it was discovered that the wretch who attempted to carry her off was a Captain O'Tuffety, an Irishman, a gambler, and a person of bad reputation, who had often presumed to offer his attentions to Mademoiselle du Voisin.

Lord Monehan called often after that, and he was a welcome guest, for his family had suffered by their adherence to the Stuarts. And no wonder that Amabel looked on him as a model of chivalry and goodness. It was soon evident that she was the great object of his visits; and at last he offered her his hand and heart. Poor young man! he had very little more to offer, for his estates, by attainders, and one thing and another, were shockingly impoverished; but Amabel loved him,

and when Lady Primrose revealed her protégé's connexions, he seemed only the more earnest in his attachment.

Under the circumstances it was deemed best to have the marriage perfectly private. Lady Primrose presented her god-daughter (as, to save appearances, she was called) with a thousand pounds and all necessary comforts. The old lady dying shortly after, Lord Monehan and his young wife went to America, and established themselves in one of the most habitable parts of the back woods. We heard afterwards that they had created round them quite a paradise, and that they had a numerous family. Lord Monehan, who on quitting England had sold his estate, dropped his title, nor was it ever again, I believe, resumed.

Neither did the illustrious parent of his lady deign to take notice of the two letters which after her marriage she had written to him. Perhaps they never came to hand; perhaps——but at all events this is the true history of my Lady Primrose's protégé, one so well known by the name of

"The Wild White Rose."

The Quaker's Wife.

In 1769, the Society of Friends was comparatively a new one, and the strictness of its members in regard to dress and manners was quite unmodified, and remarkable even in that period of formality and decorous observances. In these, my latter days, I am told that Quakers have departed much from their severity of style. I am glad for my own part to hear it, for in my belief, a religion of outward formality savours too much of the Pharisee, to be respected by the world at large; and it requires something more than a borderless cap or a scuttle bonnet to convince me, individually, of the Christian graces of humility and charity. I am bound to admit, though, that many, very many good and noble hearts have lain hidden beneath the uncreased broadcloth and dove-coloured silk of "Friends;" and so many singular phases in life having come to my knowledge, what I am going now to tell, being a curious deviation from the ordinary events

in Quaker families, will, I trust, be regarded in this light, that there is no rule, in sect or state, that has not exceptions.

My exception to the usual frigidity and formality of female Friends, was a young girl of that sect, whom I came to know, named Martha Clifton. How I came into possession of some strange passages in her life, is not essential for my readers to know;—suffice it that I am about to relate simple facts, and having outlived the dear and sweet lady who is the subject of my story, as I think it interesting, I may as well tell it.

Among the many beautiful girls I have seen in my time, I never saw any one who surpassed Martha Clifton. Somehow, the rigid Quaker style only added charms to her noble simplicity of beauty. You might as well have thought of decking out one of those young Roman women (whom "Little Mary" reads about sometimes in her history books) in furbelows and ribbons, as to wish Martha's dress anything but just what it was. Sooth to say, our young "Friend" knew well enough how to attire herself, and to contrive that the plain form of her garments should yet be so disposed, as even to enhance her exquisite face and figure.

Her parents occupied a large, sad-looking mansion opposite our house, so that I had frequent opportunities of studying the "Quaker beauty,"

as our pert needlewomen would call her, and I observed that her thick silks and satins, nay, even sober camlets, were always of the most becoming colours, olive, silver-grey, rich brown, or, on festive occasions, spotless maiden white. Though but eighteen when I first began to observe her, she sometimes looked grave and sedate enough for forty; but gleams of vivacity often illumined her face, which revealed considerable activity of feeling and spirit. Inclined by a natural love of art to worship intensely the ideal and beautiful, she was restrained from such indulgences by the cold and frigid habits of her Society; still her imagination would exhibit itself in the composition of poems, which were of no mean order. Such a mind, you may be sure, required more excitement than could be found in the formal life of Quakerism, as it then existed She knew herself to be fair; she could scarcely help it when every passer-by confirmed the knowledge with his admiration, and even cool and sober "Friends" vied with each other in the endeavour to gain her love; but Martha Clifton was hard to please, where love was concerned, and believed her heart to be insensible to the passion: yet the fire was but smouldering, to burst forth with increased intensity when once fairly kindled. She believed it could not be possible for her to love one of her own sect. She was mistaken, though, as so many of us are whenever we attempt to decide on our future course. Scarcely had she

known Everard Wilson one week when she knew her destiny had arrived.

Mr. Wilson was a young and very handsome Quaker, of Philadelphia, from whence he had not long arrived. Like Martha, his eager and intelligent mind soared far beyond the limits of the Society, but he had dared to go further than the fair "Friend," and had read worldly books extensively. It was only necessary for Martha and himself to have an opportunity of conversing, unheard by their elders, to discover that they were kindred souls. That discovery soon led to another, namely, that their hearts had become tenderly impressed ere they were aware of their danger, and the course of their love, the depth of which was known truly but to themselves, ran smooth enough.

Martha was the only child of a wealthy house; Everard, of a family high in the commercial world. When they were united, nothing that luxury, though clothed in the forms of severest simplicity, could give, was wanting; and Martha, radiant with happiness in the thought that her heart and reason were alike blest in her choice, grew even more beautiful than ever. In her plain garb of pure white silk, with no trimming or ornament, which she wore on her wedding day, I think a lovelier creature could not have been seen in Queen Charlotte's own court.

Yes; the fair Quakeress married, went to her new

home, and for some little time I neither saw nor heard anything of her, save by such bits of intelligence as Christiana Marcourt gleaned now and then from Ruth Clifton, Martha's grave and quiet mother, when my forewoman went there occasionally with some of the Brussels net which was used by the female Friends of the wealthy classes for kerchiefs and aprons; but such information was scanty enough. Whenever I thought of my former beautiful neighbour, it was to imagine her in the enjoyment of cloudless happiness; but I reckoned too fast.

As I sat at the parlour window one wet afternoon at work, a plain coach drew up to friend Clifton's door, and from it, received by her father and mother, came forth Martha Wilson: oh, so changed, so wan, thin even to meagreness, that it was with difficulty I satisfied myself this was indeed the beautiful girl whom I had seen depart from her father's house a bride. Still, her altered appearance, and the quantity of luggage subsequently arriving, convinced me that something was wrong in the young couple's *ménage;* for, allowing Martha a plenitude of filial affection, still, from all I had ever heard, I knew the formality and want of genial feeling in her paternal home to be ill-suited to her tastes. It was a long time before I found out the truth of my surmises, and the events, which caused a separation and return of the young wife to her parent's roof, and

which made at the moment some commotion among their immediate connexions in the body of "Friends."

Martha Wilson, it appeared, when settled in her own handsome and commodious residence, discovered that her husband was frequently many hours from his home, at times when business, she well knew, had no claims on him. Great absence of mind, too, marked his conduct; still Martha was unwilling to suspect that from some fatal cause her husband's affections were no longer hers. There was not, to be sure, less kindness in his manner, when present; but this grew a thing of such rare occurrence, that not merely her days, but her evenings, were solitary. Still her mind was unawakened to jealousy, till an anonymous letter—one of those deadly firebrands in domestic estrangements—arrived, informing Martha that her husband was daily in the habit of visiting a young female residing in an obscure street; and that he frequently accompanied this person to places of public amusement, more especially the Opera House, where he might be seen in a certain box, dressed in the garb of the world, and listening to the fascinating strains of the wonderful foreign singers.

It was Martha's misfortune, that instead of taking this unlucky epistle to her husband, and at once permitting him to confute it, she chose rather to muse and brood over the information it

contained, until her brain fermented, and her powers of reasoning became warped. She unhesitatingly believed the calumny. This belief was confirmed by finding in her husband's drawer a pair of soiled white gloves—articles of dress certainly not much worn by members of the Society of Friends. To her jaundiced eye, this was quite sufficient proof. The young wife assumed a coldness equal to her sense of injury. A wild thought took possession of her brain: pondered on, it became more and more tangible,—what was it? Why, that she too would don gay clothes, visit the house of sin, and with her own eyes behold if the husband of her choice was really there, partaking, with her favoured rival, these worldly snares and vanities. And such Martha truly deemed them; for, though latitudinarian as a Quaker, still she went not to the extreme of longing after stage plays, and such like vanities and temptations. Her inner life was ever pure and intellectual. If this anonymous information proved to be truth, her fate was decided.

This resolution formed, she felt impatient until it was acted on. As her maid Rachel could by no means be trusted, Martha had to undertake the difficult arrangements of this matter herself. She, therefore, under the excuse of requiring choice nets, visited the house of a fashionable *modiste*, where of course she was unknown, and requesting to speak with the principal, she ordered (not without

much confusion, as she marked the sarcastic smile of the dressmaker, a Frenchwoman) a suit of clothes proper to appear in at the scene of gaiety. She requested that the dress, and a large grey mantle in which she meant to hide her costume from the eyes of her staid household, should be sent by a discreet messenger to her house.

She took good care to be in the way when the parcel arrived, and conveyed the fashionable garments to her own apartment. That very evening she had ascertained there was to be an opera, at which their Majesties were to be present, and she had, through the means of the foreign woman the dressmaker, obtained a ticket, which was enclosed with the dress. She had, to use her own phraseology, "determined to go forth to the house of Belial" that very night. Now, in a Quaker household, such a resolution was not easy of accomplishment; but Martha had seriously resolved, and she determined to brave all.

After the two o'clock dinner, which as usual passed in silence, Everard Wilson retired to his room, and soon after went out! Stung to the quick, she also went to her own apartment—locked the door, pulled down the blinds, and unfolding her finery, surveyed it with anything but feelings of pleasure.

Musing and sorrowing over her past happiness and present affliction, time passed so rapidly that six o'clock struck ere she knew an hour had

thus gone. The opera began, she was told, at eight; and she proceeded to clothe herself in the costly attire, in which for the first and only time she would enter the world of fashion.

The pale blue satin sacque, over a petticoat of the colour "maiden's blush," the delicate Mechlin lace which adorned the robe, the gipsy-looking cloak and hood of rich velvet which served to adorn, not conceal, this exquisite toilette, enhanced Martha's perfect beauty so greatly, that for a moment she forgot the cause of this strange metamorphosis, and gazed enchanted. The grey cashmere went over all, and a black silk whalebone hood concealed the head, which Mistress Wilson had been fain to adorn and powder with her own fair hands, not daring to introduce a hair-dresser into her reserved household. All completed, she rang the bell, and desired her maid to bid them call a hired chair.

Rachel obeyed, not though without a look of as much surprise as her stolid countenance would admit of. Telling her woman she should be late home, Martha stepped into the sedan, and the Irish chairmen bore her away. The adventure now was fairly commenced, it must be finished; and in a short time she would enter the great temple of Apollo alone!

Yes! alone; she had entirely overlooked the fact, that even the daughters of the world usually went into public with a cavalier to escort them,

and that to lack this distinction was at best to appear questionable. The colour rushed into her fair face, as she was ushered to a seat in the pit, which then was the resort of the Maccaroni, and such of the citizens' wives as affected, in spite of not comprehending Italian music, a taste for this fashionable amusement. Martha, in spite of her extreme perturbation, could not fail to perceive that she was a subject of general observation; and murmurs reached her ear, which caused her to bend her eyes on her fan, wishing devoutly for the cashmere cloak which she had left behind in the sedan chair. Her great beauty, and unprotected appearance, led the gentlemen around to regard her with an impertinent curiosity, and the ladies with an affected shrinking. Such was the predicament in which the pure, retired young Quakeress had involved herself. The opera had commenced, but she attended to nothing on the stage. Her eyes, when indeed she mustered sufficient courage to raise them, were busily employed in making a survey of the brilliant assemblage before the curtain. Suddenly her gaze dwelt on a box on the second tier, in which a young girl of exquisite beauty sat conspicuously forward. Further back, dressed *à-la-mode* sat Everard Wilson. "Yes, it was truth then; she was glad she was there to confront him; glad that she sat there a living witness of his shame."

She gazed for some minutes on the pair. The young girl cast her brilliant eyes round the house—she was evidently seeking some one amid the splendid throng.

Everard, on his part, appeared to be absorbed in watching his companion, though, apparently, he seldom spoke. At length, Martha, who had gazed at this sight until her woman's heart, burning with contending passions, could bear it no longer, rose up and abruptly left her seat. Some of the beaux who were lounging about started up also, and to her extreme vexation surrounded her with offers of assistance: she hardly knew what impulse caused her to take the arm of the least obtrusive, but take it she did, saying in her formal phraseology—"Friend, I accept thy proffered assistance; oblige me by conveying me to yonder box—that hung with scarlet."

You may guess the amazement of "Fops Alley" at hearing this Quaker language; but though conceited, and a fashionable lounger, the young man Martha addressed had the feelings of a gentleman; so quietly clearing the way, he said, "Depend on me, madam; you do me honour by accepting my escort:" and in a very short space of time he conducted Martha to the box specified.

Calling the box-keeper, the young nobleman—for such he was—signed to the man to open

the door! He was obeyed, and Martha turning to thank him, he bowed and rejoined his friends below, who were engaged in an animated discussion about the pretty Quakeress in disguise.

As the box-door opened, Everard Wilson turned, and I will not even attempt to depict the expression on his face as he, with some difficulty, recognised his own wife.

"Thou!" said he, knitting his brows; then taking her by the hand he led her again to the door. "Martha," he whispered, "dost thou understand thine actions? art thou departed from reason? This dress! Oh shame! that thy husband should blush for thee."

"Shame on thyself!" said the exasperated wife. "Darest thou to confront me, thee and thy companion?"

The young female who had hastily drawn the curtains of the box, and who sat apparently much amazed at first at this scene, now directing her eye-glass towards the excited Martha, burst at this crisis into a tittering laugh. She was about to speak to Martha, when Everard laid his hand on her arm.

"Silence!" said he; "I will not have *her* addressed by thee.—Dost thou understand? not one sentence." Then turning to his wife, he said, "Martha! on thy duty I command thee to depart home. This is no time or place to explain, if I even chose to do so. Come, I will assist thee to

thy conveyance. Edith," addressing the strange female, "do thou remain here—alone—mark me. I trust thee for a few short moments; let me not on my return find myself deceived:" so saying he took his wife's hand and led her out, resistless, powerless, stupified with combined anger and apprehension. As one in a dream, she suffered him to conduct her; then, as Everard despatched a messenger for a chair, she demanded if he meant to leave "that woman of Belial" and depart with her.

"I do not," said Everard; "my duty leads me to remain here: ask no questions at present. Thee has much transgressed this night, and it will need all my love to accord thee pardon."

"What!" said Martha, "pardon me! I thank thee; thou hast said well; henceforth join whom thou wilt. —— Street," she said to the chairmen, as repulsing Everard's assistance, she entered the sedan. The bearers went on, and Martha, in the midst of her indignation, was reminded by her chilliness that she had lost the wrapper in which she came, so that she would evidently have to enter her own house in her gay dress. When the chair stopped at her door, she gave orders to the men that her women should bring out a cloak; her orders being obeyed, she enveloped her person in it before she quitted the sedan. But truth to say, the quiet Quaker household were sufficiently scandalized at their mistress's pro-

ceedings, without needing to behold with their own eyes her strange and unseemly transformation. Martha's first step, after taking off her opera costume, and securely hiding it from the prying eyes of Mistress Rachel, was to abandon her own apartment and lodge herself in a remoter one. She had succeeded in discovering the source of her unhappiness; she felt degraded in her own estimation; her husband had all but avowed that she had forfeited his, and a more thoroughly miserable woman perhaps did not at that moment exist.

The next morning, having spent the night in tears, Martha despatched a letter to her husband, requesting that if he could not satisfactorily account for his conduct, he would prepare measures for an immediate separation.

Everard turned pale when he read this letter, so haughty and uncompromising in its tone—so unwife-like he thought in its character. He had been during the past night preparing for a painful confession, but one which would have restored him Martha's unbounded love and confidence. Now, the demon of pride stepped in and whispered—"If she so mistrusted me, I will not wound my own feelings to save hers." He therefore returned an answer, avowing it impossible to explain at present, the matter involving another person's feelings. He also at the same time requested his wife to summon her parents, and

provide her own solicitor. Martha, heart-stricken, and more than ever convinced of his guilt, did as she was desired; and the result of these proceedings was, that she returned to her own family in a state of health which afforded the most serious grounds for apprehensions of the worst kind.

Thus did twelve months pass away mournfully enough to Martha. Her appearance became so altered, that save for her native elegance of demeanour, few would have recognised the beautiful Quakeress. Her own fortune had been returned, and both she and her friends declined receiving any allowance from Everard.

She never even heard of him, for all communication between the families was interdicted. Quakers, when vindictive, are silently so; and Friends Clifton, loving their daughter fondly, resented sternly her wrongs.

One day she received a note written in a small female hand, requesting Mrs. Wilson would visit a house in the neighbourhood of Bloomsbury—naming the street, in which resided a dying woman who had grievously injured her. Such an invitation Martha would scarcely have refused at any time, but perhaps a foreboding of who this correspondent might be, induced her on this occasion still more earnestly to go.

She asked Christiana Marcourt to go with her; and Christiana, who possessed her confidence, and

was much respected by her, consenting, they departed together to the locality indicated in the note, and arrived at length at the door of a mean-looking house.

A woman servant, dirty and slatternly, ushered them to a room on the first floor; where, stretched on a poor couch, arranged as a bed, lay a girl evidently in the last stage of decline. The invalid beckoned her visitor to take a chair close to the couch, for a cough, distressing even to hear, interrupted the poor girl every minute. Martha, who had recognised her opera rival, turned pale, and the tears came into her eyes; she evidently anticipated a heart-rending confession of wrongs and injuries done to herself. Judge, then, how great was her surprise, when, after a paroxysm of coughing, the sick girl, barely able to speak, addressed Mistress Wilson by saying, "I felt I could not die without telling you that your husband is free from all guilt as regards myself, for I am—his sister!"

An exclamation burst from the lips of Martha. The girl continued—"Hear what I have to say, while breath is given me. It was shame first sealed Everard's lips, and pride seals them now; and the fear that false shame, and wounded pride together, will seal them when I am gone, induced me to send for you to-day."

A pause ensued; the unhappy young creature was breathless and nearly fainting; when a little

recovered, she related such circumstances as I shall narrate precisely as I heard them.

At sixteen years of age, Edith Wilson, notwithstanding the strictness of her education, and the sobriety of her father's household, possessed an incorrigible levity of heart and mind. Gifted with great beauty, her gaiety went beyond the pardonable effervescence of youth, and the frivolity and natural reckless tendency of her disposition, joined to lax principles, rendered her conduct most unbecoming. She formed, secretly, acquaintances out of the Society; and many a night, when her parents deemed her retired to rest, had she, furnished with a pass-key, quitted her paternal roof, and been a partaker of the secret and not over-reputable diversions, which even in the strict and Puritanical city of Philadelphia found votaries among the young and viciously inclined. Some natures indeed are so warped, by innate vice, that not all the pious training in the world—at least by human hands—can bend them straight. *One* bad female acquaintance, and many vile books, had so perverted Edith Wilson, that at an early age she secretly laughed at morals and religion.

I do not wish, however, to dilate on the errors of this guilty young creature: suffice it, that when she was at length formally betrothed, by her parents, to a staid and certainly somewhat elderly merchant of the Quaker persuasion, she eloped from her father's house, taking a sum of money with

her, and sailed from Philadelphia undiscovered, though her distracted brother and father lost no time in pursuit. Edith made her voyage, alone and unprotected; on arriving in England, to continue so formed no part of her plans. Gifted with rare beauty and immense vivacity, destruction, seeking for it as she did, was inevitable. When her brother Everard, (whose chief object in coming to England was to discover and reclaim her if possible,) some short time after his marriage, did at last behold her, she was, to his unfeigned horror and subsequent torment, associated with one whose society and protection only conferred wealthy shame and inevitable disgrace. Everard, with forcible determination, detached her from the degrading connexion, took apartments in a remote part of the town, and placed her under the strict care of a respectable old man and woman who had been servants in his family, and lately arrived in England. When placed there, and told that she must consider those plain, but comfortable rooms her home for the present, Edith raved and threatened violently, but to no purpose. She was henceforth never left unguarded by her brother or his servants, and being without money, had no easy means of breaking her chains.

This life continued some time, but one day reading the Gazette, she discovered that a rich and childless relative, ignorant of course of her misconduct, had died, and bequeathed her a large

sum of money. Not being able to claim this legacy without Everard's assistance, she formed a new plan—she affected extreme penitence and humility; and so perfectly deceived her brother, that having received the money for her, he was induced to place the power of disposing of it in her own hands, and hoped that at last she might be trusted.

She pursued this hypocritical conduct for some time, until Andrew, the servant, and her brother both being off their guard, she gave renewed license to her love of extravagance and pleasure. Her object being to see her former admirer, she engaged a box at the opera; and Everard found, to his dismay, that opposition was fruitless. He had foolishly resigned part of his power, and nothing now seemed effectual but his constant surveillance.

A note from Lord —— having been intercepted by Andrew, and Edith persisting that she would frequent her opera box, Everard announced his intention to go with her. It was received with incredulous smiles. "In that dress?" "No," answered her brother—"I shall wear the dress of the world; to save my sister from further sin, it will be admissible." And assuredly his presence did preserve her from the society she so much desired, until the evening when Martha's inopportune appearance surprised them. Edith was about to explain all, and it was then that Everard

by his words and gestures, forbid her communicativeness. During his short absence that night, however, she contrived to see Lord ——; and two months after her brother's formal separation from his wife, she eloped from his protection to her titled and profligate lover.

The rest of her history I dare not dwell on. It was such as Hogarth has described in some of his most vivid and matchless pictures. Cards and extravagance soon dissipated her own money; and he whose protection she had so wilfully sought became wearied of her expensive whims.

A short time before her interview with Martha, her brother had discovered her sinking from illness and want, in a low and wretched dwelling—into such an extreme of misery had vice plunged her. He would have taken the wanderer to his own now solitary and loveless home, for he perceived the end was nigh at hand, but she so ardently begged to be alone, that he permitted her to remain in the humble refuge in which Martha found her. She intreated that she might effect a reconciliation between her brother and his wife ere she died, but to this proposition he would not listen. "He thought," said she to Martha, "that you should have trusted him better."

"And so I should," said the weeping wife, tenderly wiping the dying girl's brow, damp with excitement and exhaustion.

* * * * *

Martha Wilson had many subsequent interviews with her fallen sister; and it was at the very last, that—hastily summoned to the closing scene—husband and wife met again. It was by the side of that death-bed that they felt how slight had been the cause of their dissension; and the only feeling which prevented a reconciliation—pride—in that awful hour of human suffering and expiation was driven from their hearts.

Edith Wilson died calmly, and even with hope of forgiveness; praying that the tears with which, like the sinner of olden time, she had washed her Saviour's feet, might in His eye wash away her many sins; and trusting, with a contrite devotion, that faith in His mercy would save her.

The Prima Donna.

One day, I was attracted by hearing a young fresh voice warbling like a bird, as I was tending a geranium in the work-room window. It was chanting an air of Corelli's set to English words, "*Oh could I see once more the youth I loved so true!*" and the richness of ornament with which the singer loaded the simple air, without effort, or departure from the original style of the composer, told me—who loved music dearly, and thought myself no mean judge of it—that it was either a heaven-taught genius, or one who had been well trained. I raised the sash, and looking out, beheld a girl of twelve, poorly but tidily clad; she held in her hand a basket of flowers, made into nosegays; and resting herself on our door-steps, while she tied up some of her blossoms for sale, was singing meanwhile quite unconsciously. Looking up, at length, and seeing us, she took up her basket of flowers, and was about to depart, when Christiana Marcourt, who

was among the admiring audience, said to me in a low voice, "Let us have her in here."

Always well pleased to give my workwomen any harmless recreation, I called to the girl, and desired to see her flowers. She came back blushing like one of her own roses, and was fetched up into the work-room. A pretty little lass she was, giving promise of one day possessing beauty of no mean order, provided due care was taken of it, for let me here observe that beauty is a rare hot-house plant, and by no means grows wild in perfection. A rich dark complexion, glowing with health, and the fresh tints of youth, large black oriental eyes, silken black hair, curling in thick glossy curls—like a peasant or a gipsy in one of Gainsborough's pictures, was this girl!—and indeed I half suspected her of belonging to the latter race, until I questioned her, and discovered that she was town bred and born, getting her flowers from that rural locality Covent Garden market.

We purchased all her flowers, and then bargained for a song to be thrown in.

"As many as you please, madam," she said; "I know plenty." Such prodigality was to be taken advantage of. Song after song did she sing. "She was so glad she could amuse us," she said, "and so thankful to us for buying her flowers, for she had a sick father at home, and her mother could earn very little at needle-work, which was all they had between them and starvation.

Questioning her as to her love of singing, it appeared that her father was a poor musician, and that his little daughter had inherited his talent. He had taught her music from a very early age, and he had hoped, she said simply, before this to have placed her under some good master; but now indeed, her dear father being sick, and the family so very poor, she must give up all notion of being a singer, and be contented to fill some honest useful station, for they were in such straits, that but for her selling a few flowers, they would often be in want of bread.

All this, Celia Roeberry, for such was her name, said with great simplicity, apparently not aiming at either pity or admiration. I could not help wishing to serve this poor family, and believed in my own heart, that if the girl's superb voice could obtain proper cultivation, she would be excelled by none, and that by her exertions her family might be raised from indigence. In those days, singers and actresses were by no means the Pariahs of society; and if, in addition to superiority in Art, they were also virtuous and well-conducted women, nothing could exceed the respect and admiration paid them; and it always struck me that such was no more than their due, for surely if Virtue untempted and unattractive claims our respect, we ought to yield it in a double measure to those who, encountering hourly perils in a life assailed by flatteries and temptations, yet resist

such influences, and keep undeviatingly in the straight and thorny path.

Their gracious Majesties George the Third and Queen Charlotte decidedly patronized musical merit; and a thought struck me, that if I could interest the Queen, in behalf of this poor lowly girl, she might do something better than wander about the streets selling posies, an occupation I thought just as likely to injure her morals as the concert-room or the theatre.

It so happened that very day, I had received a command to wait on Her Majesty at her palace at Kew on the morrow; and I determined, if the Queen appeared gracious, and inclined to talk, to introduce Celia Roeberry's charming voice, and interesting story. She was dismissed, therefore, from our work-room, with orders to call again and bring some flowers; and next morning I prepared myself to measure Her Majesty for a green and silver court-dress. It was, as I knew well by experience, a tedious business, and this identical day it was worse than ever. I was obliged to start from town very early to be at the palace punctually by nine in the morning, and was there received by one of Her Majesty's women-in-waiting, who took me into the apartment of Madame S——, the German Mistress of the Robes. The young lady informed me that Madame was then in attendance upon the Queen, but would conduct me to her as soon as her duties were concluded

Just then a bell rang, and the young lady, who was a pleasant affable kind of body, hurried off as hard as she could; not in time though, it appeared, to save a reprimand, for presently in bustled Madame S—— looking very red and angry, and taking snuff immoderately. She sat down, using a large green fan to revive herself with after the laborious task which she assured me she had been fulfilling. Another bell ringing, she jumped up, and said in her broken guttural English, "Gome mit me, Mishtresh Taffetas; dat isht Her Majesty's signal dat she want to see you, Gome directly; Her Majesty mosht not be kept waiting, gome."

Hurrying me up a private staircase, I found myself brought into the presence of Queen Charlotte, who with her everlasting knitting on her knee, was reading a devout book, while Her Majesty's lappets were being pinned on. I do not think myself, that the Queen was so ill-looking as her pictures mostly represent her. At any rate there was an appearance of affability, which, when I have chanced to be honoured with her notice, took away from all mere plainness of feature.

This morning Her Majesty appeared in the happiest of moods. I ventured to produce Celia's flowers, which Christiana Marcourt had arranged beautifully, and in a way for which she was so famous, that on Court days her time was entirely taken up in disposing the nosegays of the

noble ladies. The Queen graciously accepted my humble offering; she seemed quite charmed with the flowers. "They smell very sweet," she was pleased to observe; "I am obliged to you, Mistress Taffetas." I said I believed her gracious Majesty would feel interested in the little history connected with those flowers. In the intervals of fitting the patterns on the Queen, I contrived to tell my story. "This is quite curious," said Her Majesty, when at length I concluded; "I will speak to the King." Just then the door was rattled violently. "Dere isht de Keeng," said Madame S——; and in came King George himself, just as I had finished my operations.

"Charlotte, Charlotte," quoth the monarch, in that quick way for which he was famous, "who—who's this—who's this, eh? new maid? What's her name? Pretty woman, eh, Charlotte? I like to see pretty women." Then turning to the Queen, he desired to know what had detained her so unusually long that day. When the Queen had satisfied the Royal querist, I humbly desired to know if Her Majesty had any further commands. "Oh, I see—I see," said the King. "Dress-maker, eh—mantua-maker?—quite right—quite right; we must be fine; good for trade—good for trade—good for trade; but no foreign silks, no foreign silks—mind that, mind that. Good morning—good morning;" and the worthy monarch waved,

his hand in rapid succession, in token that the audience was finished. Then the Queen, making a sign for me to stay, and laying her hand on His Majesty's sleeve—a way of hers when she was in earnest—repeated Celia's story.

The King listened with elevated eyebrows. "What—what—what! Eh! fine voice has she? Let it be cultivated; can't have too many good singers. Good voices scarce in England—very scarce, very scarce—very. Send your nightingale abroad, Charlotte; and perhaps in a few years she may sing like Billington. Fine woman Billington—fine woman—too fat, though." The Queen here interposed, and explained Celia's circumstances. George III. pursed up his mouth, and considered; at last a bright idea struck him —"Have her here," said he, "have her here; like to hear—hear her myself. Consider myself a judge; so are you, Charlotte, so are you. When shall she come, eh?—when shall she come?" He seemed quite eager to hear this young singer. The Queen fixed the next day at three o'clock; "between the King's dinner hour and mine," she said graciously. And highly pleased with the result of my visit, I took my leave, and sent for Celia as soon as possible.

She was greatly terrified at the prospect of singing to royalty. "I have no clothes to go in," said she with dismay. "You must be measured," I replied; "I will give you a suit fit and proper

to go in, and your clothes will be made by Her Majesty's own dressmaker; so you will have nothing to fear on that score. Curl your hair nicely, and come here at twelve, punctually, to morrow; bring all your best songs."

So in due time Celia came; we dressed her with perfect simplicity—white frock, cherry-coloured broad sash, and cherry sleeve ribands; her own hair curled close to her pretty head; and very well she looked. I accompanied her to the palace, and after the usual course of ceremony we were ushered before Royalty. And how well Celia sang—her first trepidation over! Their Majesties were delighted, and dismissed the little musician with a promise of doing something substantial in aid of her musical education, and in support of her parents. They kept the Royal word. A place of small emolument, but sufficient to maintain the family in decent comfort, was presented to Mr. Roeberry; and Celia was sent to Italy, with a sufficient sum to maintain and educate her in music for seven years. Her mother accompanied the young girl, who wrote to me often, describing the country, and the course of life she pursued, all of which reports were conveyed by me to her Royal patrons.

It was in the year 1772 that Celia Roeberry went abroad: in 1777, she was deemed thoroughly

capable of appearing as a prima donna in one of the principal theatres of Italy. By the advice of her master, her name was altered to Celiani, under which title she soon became famous. Her beauty I understood to be something wonderful, though in her letters she never referred to it by any chance. She was then seventeen years old; and in 1779, her first appearance in London, was announced "from La Scala."

She came to our house, poor girl, the first thing. She had been an orphan then two years; and she wept as she threw herself in my arms, and mourned that her dear parents were not living to witness and enjoy her fame. I consoled her with the reflection, how much beyond all earthly fame they were. I then looked at her with pride and gratification. Oh! how lovely she was! Shape, feature, grace,—all the attributes of beauty were there. Alas! what deep shade was it that subsequently fell over that sunshine of loveliness and innocence? To my great joy, Celia had returned from Italy as good, I believe from my heart, as when she quitted England; yet a strange and gloomy foreboding flitted across my spirit as I gazed on her.

Ah, me! with your talent, your beauty, your wit and grace, sweet Celia, what were they in the balance against—— But this is not telling a story in a straightforward manner. Yet to think that no record should exist of all these gifts and

graces, except in an old woman's gossipings. Well-a-day! Well-a-day!

* * * * * *

The Signorina Celiani appeared first at a private concert at Her Majesty's house at Buckingham Gate, where she charmed her Royal patrons, and excited the fervent admiration of every one. I have a picture of her on ivory as she appeared on that occasion, taken by Christiana Marcourt's nephew, who had a pretty sort of talent in that way. I had that night the high honour of being desired by the Queen to accompany the Signorina to the palace, and of taking tea with Madame S——, and the ladies who were in attendance on her Majesty, while the concert took place. How radiant Celia looked after it was all over!

Well! she afterwards appeared at the Opera in "*Medea*," "*Cleone*,"—all those old-fashioned compositions, of which I have forgotten half the names,—"*Didone*," "*Proserpine*," and works of Scarlatti, Pergolesi, and a host of others. Her success in these was undoubted; and the whole world of fashion knelt at the feet of that poor little girl, who once came singing and selling her flowers beneath our window.

She herself had grown into the rarest and most beautiful flower of the human garden; but the canker was at hand to blight the heart of the fairest rose that ever bloomed. Signorina Celiani

was deaf to all overtures of levity and impertinence; indeed, so she was to many honourable offers. Her heart was entirely then in her own possession, and, the season over, she returned to the Continent, and there pursued her profession with unqualified success. When she again next year revisited her native country, her beauty and talent had reached an acmé of perfection seldom witnessed. It was on this second visit that she was first beheld by the young Earl of Mountcarwin, a nobleman who some few years before had attained his majority, and who then was known in his own circle as profligate, ambitious, and haughty, beyond mere aristocratic elevation.

From his mother, the arrogant Lady Mountcarwin, did this young man inherit pride of the most invulnerable character. With this pride was mingled the idea that every living thing and person should defer to him. He was fascinated by Celiani; in fact, he loved her, as such men know the passion of love. The reputation of stainless virtue she had obtained would have formed to others a most insuperable obstacle: but he was cautious and wily; he sought not to ingratiate himself by splendid gifts, or commonplace admiration; he obtained an introduction to her under the name of a simple gentleman, trusting to his handsome person, and polished insinuating manners, to do the rest. He reckoned too well. My poor Celia! she believed him at

first a poor gentleman; crediting this, she held no control over her heart, but gave it up to her first deep love. Then, once secure of her acknowledged affection, came the truth. "He could not marry in his mother's life-time." Oh, fool! fool! easily duped! and yet she did not fall so easy a victim as ye who read perhaps think.

I noted the change in her manner, and taxed her with its being caused by love. She sighed, but did not deny the charge: she was ever truthful. Laura Vanti, her woman who attended on her, and whose fidelity and affection supplied the place of Celia's lost mother, came to me, and asked if I knew what had so altered her *fanciulla*—so she mostly termed her mistress.

Laura's suspicions were fixed on the haughty young man, whose visits to the Signorina were beginning, the woman said, to be remarked.

* * * * * *

How am I to continue what I afterwards learned at intervals? The world, for once, choosing to place the best construction, spread a report of Celiani's approaching marriage with Lord Mountcarwin. This reached his mother's ears; she became furious with rage; in vain her son denied such intention; she vowed revenge. Meanwhile, he, careless of the consequences, pursued his own reckless game. Baffled he was, till at length he threatened his own life, and acted so artful a part, that she, who would have died for him,

sacrificed that which she had ever valued more than life—honour.

I do not mean to plead for her. I know I must not; for she who speaks of forgiveness to a fallen woman, is looked on mostly as inclining to wickedness herself, and favouring sin: but think, oh! think how she was tempted. Love pleaded so powerfully. No one by to whisper, "Courage, keep in the straight path:" for Laura Vanti had been compelled just at that time to return to Genoa to see her dying mother, and I was at Weymouth for my health. In a word—temptation came to her, as it comes in some appointed hour to all. Triumph loudly ye who overcome; but let fall some tears over those whose strength has failed them in time of need. So she fell, whom the cities of Europe wondered at and worshipped, as the matchless Celiani. But the world at length perceived the truth. When was it ever slow to detect evil? Celia, engrossed with but one object, herself first opened its eyes. She neglected that terrible power—the public! Sometimes they were disappointed by their idol: then came the results—coolness first to her most charming efforts; then, decided disapprobation; and then, the discountenance of the best part of Queen Charlotte's court circle.

Her Majesty's own marked indifference at a concert, sealed her discomfiture. Celia Celiani broke her engagements, and ventured no more before the

public. Lord Mountcarwin and she found refuge in a retired spot of great beauty situated on the banks of the Thames.

Such was the effect of the truth being known —that of falsehood has yet to be shown. It has been credited since, that the Earl himself, to provoke his mother, who had offended him about money matters, and who withheld some from him that was solely in her power to bestow, because he refused to wed the rich widow of the Marquis of Kalimore, favoured the report of his secret marriage with Celiani. However that might have been, it is certain that the Countess firmly believed the assertion.

Lady Mountcarwin was of foreign descent; some people said she was related to—that is, was of the same blood—as that wicked Marchioness Brinvilliers. I fear she knew some of the means by which her terrible acts were committed. My lord the young Earl was one day suddenly sent for—his uncle, an archbishop, was said to be dying. On that day, a few hours after his departure, a lady in a hood and cloak arrived at the Signorina's villa. She desired to see Celia. She was instantly admitted, although she would give no name. The servants said afterwards, they believed she did not stay long, but no one saw her quit the house. Alarmed at hearing nothing of their mistress, about dusk some of her domestics made a pre-

text to enter her apartments. Celia Celiani was stretched on the floor, dead—quite, quite dead! A nosegay of flowers was clutched in her right hand; the lips and mouth of the corpse were lividly blue. One of the servants, who had previously lived, it appeared, in the Mountearwin family, called to those standing by, to be careful and not inhale the flowers. They were put by for the doctor to examine when he came. The strange lady was not recognised, I believe; that is, none cared to do so.

You all remember Queen Eleanor's visit to Fair Rosamond; this was much the same thing, done in a more refined way. Lord! have more mercy on us than we have on one another, or woe, woe to mankind.

* * * * * *

There was a verdict of "died by the visitation of God." Lord Mountearwin married soon after Lord Kalimore's widow; whether he was very happy is a question; and for Celia's memory——

"Put down the pen, little Mary. I am very, very sad."

The Porcelain Mania.

Would you like to know how Abraham Coffley made for himself a snug independence? I, who knew him when he had not a decent coat to his back, nor yet very creditable shoes to his feet, used to wonder at his sudden prosperity, and, like many others, settled in my own mind that Abraham after all had been a little bit miserly: but I came to learn the truth afterwards: and, bless me! who would have ever supposed that Abraham Coffley—whose whole life from his cradle had been a series of disappointments, commencing immediately after his christening, when his godfather, supposed to be very rich, turned bankrupt—would have had the wit to be a courtier, ay, and a successful courtier too?

My stars! how his poor mother would have stared could she have seen a man in high office made out of her boy "Bram," who from childhood had devoted himself to picking up rubbish wherever he could find it. He never would take to any regular employment, which was

one reason, maybe, why he never got on like other folks. He became daily more and more shabby and dingy, and as he faded into the twilight of fortune, people dubbed him an antiquary; and if that means grubbing everywhere after all sorts of odd things, an antiquary Abraham was to all intents and purposes.

He never possessed money enough, poor fellow! to trade for himself, so he used to get employed by great folks to find any out-of-the-way matter which they set their whimsical hearts on obtaining. For this he got merely commission from buyer to seller, and after all it was but a precarious and poor kind of living.

To add to his misfortunes, when Abraham was about thirty he chose to commit the extravagance of falling in love; he found, though, that he could no ways afford that luxury. So foolish in him, as I said, after waiting so long he might surely have contrived to wait a little longer; but no, he plunges over head and ears in love with Tabitha Dawson, clear starcher—a girl who, working from morning till night, could scarcely do more than support herself and her bed-ridden mother. People joked on the matter, and said, it would be difficult for folks with such names as Tabitha and Abraham to get through the world! So there they were, engaged to be married, and they seemed likely enough to remain engaged all their lives if they were only constant.

Well! about this period an extraordinary disease broke out among women of taste and fashion, or those who craved to be thought such. The chief symptoms of this disorder were exhibited in a rabid desire to collect together old jugs, teapots, and china monsters, chiefly conspicuous for age and intense ugliness.

As I noticed this epidemic making its fearful ravages in the families of my best customers, I used to think, "Well, it may be the fashion,—for the presiding priestesses of that conspicuous goddess knew well the odd and dainty freaks with which she inspired her votaries,—but as for the taste, common sense help us! if this be patronage of the arts in the eighteenth century." A lady's drawing-room in those days was lumbered up with blue dragons, Nankin idols, green tea-pots, serpents, lizards, crocodiles, colossal scent-jars, and diminutive tea-cups. Nothing was too absurd for these votaries of "Pan,"—forgive the sorry jest, dear reader; an old woman will sometimes have her joke, you know.

This porcelain whim was the greatest and most expensive of all feminine caprices, and accordingly, husbands, brothers, lovers were continually waging a great war with "China." After all, though, it made poor Abraham Coffley's fortune, beside the fortune of many another collector; but where all the ugly things came from was always, I confess, a mystery to me. People reported that somewhere in

the west of England there was a great secret manufactory, where men were employed day and night in making these droll curiosities, and where none were permitted to enter or make egress except blindfolded. That, however, I always believed to be a pure romance. I think French artists mainly supplied those foolish toys; but they came plentifully from some place, and many of them are even now in existence, I myself being silly enough to buy a set of blue and white coffee mugs warranted pure Nankin: goodness knows if that were truly the case. They have lasted my time out, however, and will perhaps live another generation or two, just to show what abominable ideas of taste existed in my day.

However, all classes of women were bitten with this porcelain mania. The elder daughters of King George the Third were, at the period I speak of, just budding into womanhood, and even these princesses were infected with the prevailing foible—one of them particularly. I will not name her Royal Highness, but merely in speaking about her, say—"the Princess." Well! this was an expensive taste to indulge, for toys of this nature sometimes realized fabulous sums—and the Princess's income not being quite proportioned to her exalted station, she was often obliged to balk her fancy, and go without some fright of a red and yellow parrot, or a huge jar of hideous shape. How Abraham Coffley got

scent of this inclination I cannot say, or how he obtained access to the Royal lady I do not know—some back stairs influence, I suppose; but that he did obtain it is certain, and nicely he laid his plans. First, her Royal Highness was requested to accept a darling of a blue and white idol, ravishingly ugly, and with legs and arms enough to supply all its generation. Then, after a short interval, a fiery dragon was offered, big enough for a foot-bath; the Princess wondered and hesitated, but joy and gratitude overcame her scruples, and the dragon was graciously received. These presents came so often, that at length her Royal Highness desired to see this generous and loyal individual. Poor Abraham, his heart leaped within him. Somehow or other, in the desperation of the case he obtained decent clothes, and taking with him as his best introduction a blue jar of fabulous hideousness, he was brought into the presence of his Royal patroness.

When the Princess saw Abraham's queer figure and rusty appearance—for no clothes, however new, could ever divest him of that—her conscience reproached her for the expense she had put him to; and she graciously desired to be permitted to pay for her china. "No!" Abraham shrunk from the offer, evidently hurt and annoyed. The good-natured young lady felt pained at the apparent insult she had offered to so worthy and respectable a man. Abraham here took the op-

portunity to describe some rare curiosities he knew of. The Royal mouth—to speak vulgarly—watered. Abraham saw he had created a profound impression, and respectfully retired, bearing with him the Princess's assurance that he should be admitted to her presence when requisite. He took thenceforth pretty frequent advantage of this permission, always accompanied by a monster of some sort, the Princess continually demanding to know how she could repay these devoted and generous acts of loyalty.

So time wore on, and Abraham, save when he went to Court, remained as dingy as in days of yore. I saw no amendment in his clothes or person, no signs of his marriage.

One day a Royal page was seen at his obscure residence. It was one of the Princess's suite. Her Royal Highness desired that, if possible, Abraham should procure a green monkey in china, the size and proportions of which were accurately described. Abraham was in despair; he knew of but one such monkey in the animal world—that is, the animal world of porcelain. Still he promised to do his best. "Any reward," the page added, "in her Royal Highness's power to bestow, Mr. Coffley would only have to ask for if he could procure what was desired. The thing was now, how to obtain a green monkey. Just at this critical juncture died the venerable antiquary, on whose sinecure place sly Abraham had long cast a wistful

and an eager eye. The green monkey *must* be had. For the next three days indefatigable Abraham searched every nook and cranny of London to find the coveted rarity. Horror and desperation! there was not one to be heard of, but *the* one—Lady ——'s green monkey; and that, no sum or possible temptation could induce her Ladyship to part with. As a last resource, Abraham paraded for whole days about the docks: luckily, at last, in came a vessel from Canton. Abraham's first business was to rush on board, and catching the first mate's ear, to ask if they had any china-ware on board. The answer was favourable—"they had." "Had they"—trembling to put the question, a last resource,—"had they any green monkeys?" Oh! ecstacy of joy—"Yes, two or three," the mate thought. "Here, Ben, overhaul that cargo of porcelain ware!" Ben doing this thing at the word of command, Abraham was shortly afterwards embracing *two* green monkeys, the founders, he trusted, of his fortune. He purchased both, giving rather more than needful, because he had so palpably betrayed his joy, that the supercargo must have been either of an angelic disposition, not usual in such members of commerce, or else a fool, not to have taken advantage of his anxiety.

The next day his Court suit was donned, and with the two precious monkeys wrapped up carefully, our adventurer reached the palace in safety.

Word being sent to the Princess, the purveyor of porcelain was admitted on the instant. Nothing could exceed her Royal Highness's transports at sight of the china monsters, save Abraham's own previous ones. "You must and shall tell me how I can serve you," the Royal young lady said. Deprecating all idea of reward, Abraham nevertheless hinted delicately that there was a favour he would fain solicit. "Name it," said the young Princess, her eyes sparkling as she bent them fondly on the perfections of her green monkeys —"name it, Mr. Coffley, pray." "Mr. ——, the —— for ——, is just dead; could your Royal Highness procure me the reversion of his office? It would more than repay me for any trifling trouble—and I——" "Stay here a moment."

Her Royal Highness hurried into a neighbouring apartment. The King was there. The Princess, charming and lively, was a great favourite of His Majesty's. "Papa," she exclaimed, "do me a favour." "Favour—favour, child—what, what is it?—not money, I hope—got—got none, none to spare." "No, but you know the queer man who brings me the china; well, he wants the reversion of Mr. ——'s office, who is just dead. Do give it him—he really must have something." And the petted girl put her arms coaxingly round the Royal parental neck. "Ah, ah! did I not tell you that your china merchant must be paid, and at a fine, uncon-

scionable rate too, let me tell you;—why, the appointment is worth £3,000 a year! But there, there, somebody must get it—as well he as another. There, my dear," (signing a paper,) "give your crockery man that, and tell him he has brought his wares to a fine market." And the King laughed —and the Princess laughed; and Abraham, it may be supposed, when he got fairly installed in office, laughed too. He married Tabitha, and, for aught I know, as the story-books say, they lived happily for ever after.

The Highwayman's Bridal.

MINE were the days for gallant robbers, whose fine clothes, high bearing, and (frequently) good birth, took away, in the view of the superficial observer, much of the darkness of crime actually surrounding their deeds and lives. You were divested of your rings and purses, often with a demeanour so polished, that really it rather resembled paying a toll to good manners, than submitting to a highway robbery. And though it nevertheless was a *bona fide* theft, still it was more soothing to the feelings at the time, than being knocked down with the butt-end of a pistol, or bullied as well as plundered. Fashion too, capricious in this, as in all else, affected some knights of the road above others, and fine ladies interested themselves about the deeds of highwaymen, conspicuous for handsome persons and brave conduct, or rather daring villany. These fair dames also were usually much concerned in their heroes' final incarcerations, and exits at

the fatal tree of Tyburn. Yet highwaymen had, as everybody knows, been still more popular in the preceding reign; but ever and anon, as the "profession" seemed to be on the very verge of decay, and extremely likely to dwindle down into mere commonplace theft and murder, some new candidate was sure to start up and revive the dying embers of the road chivalry. One in particular was notorious enough in his brief day (for the career of these knights-errants was seldom of long continuance) for most of the qualities I have described as attributes of heroes of the road. He was well connected, his uncle being a clergyman in a high ecclesiastical appointment. His person was elegant, his manners courtly, and his daring rash, even to an extraordinary degree. Mingling freely in fashionable society in his real name, his deeds of robbery were the talk of the town under his assumed one. His proper designation was Richard Mowbray—that belonging to the road (his sole source of revenue) was Captain de Montmorency—a patronymic high sounding enough. I do not mean, however, to infer that any one suspected the man of fashion and the highwayman to be one and the same person; that was never known until the event which I am about to relate took place.

Richard Mowbray had spent his own small patrimony, years before the period at which this narrative commences, in the pleasures of the town; that is

to say, it had melted in ridottos, playhouses, faro, horseflesh, and hazard. He had exhausted the kindness and forbearance of his relations, from whom he had borrowed and begged, until borrowing or begging became at last impracticable. He had known most extremes of life; and moreover, when debts and poverty stared him grimly in the face, he knew not one useful art by which he could support existence, or pay dividends to his creditors. What was to be done? He eluded a jail as long as he could; and one eventful night, riding on horseback in a solitary place, he met—covered by the darkness from all risk of discovery—a traveller well mounted—plethoric in purse as in person—laden, in short, with money-bags, and bearing likewise the burden of excessive fear.

It was a sudden thought, acted upon as suddenly. Resistance was not even dreamed of. Mowbray made off with his booty, considerable enough to repair his exhausted finances, and to pay his most pressing creditors. It was robbing Peter to pay Paul. And so, by night, under shelter of a mask and darkness, the ruined gentleman, the desperate spendthrift, became the highwayman. People who knew his circumstances whispered their surprise when it was known that Richard Mowbray had paid his debts, and that he himself made more than his customary appearance. Now indeed his fine person was ever clad in all the

newest braveries of the day; and in his double character many a conquest did he make, for he disburthened ladies of their jewels and purses with so fine a manner, that the defrauded fair ones forgot their losses in admiration of the chivalrous despoiler; and Richard, in both his phases, drank deep draughts of pleasure, till he drained the Circean cup to its veriest dregs.

Just as even pleasure became wearisome, when festive and high-bred delights had no zest for him, and the lower extremes of licentiousness and drinking, diversified by the keen excitement and threats of danger which distinguished his predatory existence, began to satiate, a new light broke on the feverish atmosphere of his life. He loved. Yes; Richard Mowbray, the ruined patrician, De Montmorency, the gallant highwayman, who had hitherto resisted every good or evil influence which Love, pure or earth-stained, offers to his votaries, succumbed to the simple charms of a young, unlearned, unambitious girl—so youthful, indeed, that her tastes and habits were almost childish. Flavia Hardcourt had just attained her sixteenth year—had loved nothing so much as her dear old father, an honest country gentleman, and a worthy magistrate. Flavia had never been even to London. Mr. Hardcourt resided at Aveling, a retired village, about twenty miles from the metropolis; and with the exception of fox-hunting, and convivial drinking, the old gentleman, on his side, found

no pleasure but in making happy the gentle girl who, from the hour of her birth (which event terminated her mother's existence), had been his constant playmate and companion. And it was to this simple wild-flower that the gay man of the town, reckless, unprincipled, improvident, irreligious, and rash, presumed to lift his eyes, to elevate his heart; and stranger still, to this being, the moral antipodes of her pure self, did Flavia Hardcourt surrender her modest, inestimable love.

It must have been her very childishness and purity that attracted the desperate robber, the hardened libertine—now about to commit his worst and most inexcusable crime. He had accidentally met Mr. Hardcourt at a county hunt, and had, with others of his companions, been invited by that honest gentleman to a rustic fête, in honour of Flavia's natal day—a day he was wont to observe, remarkable to him, for commemorating his greatest misfortune, and his intensest happiness; and at first sight of her, the highwayman vowed to win and wear that pure bud of innocent freshness and rare fragrance of soul.

Master Richard Mowbray,—unscrupulous De Montmorency,—I will relate how you kept your vow.

He henceforth haunted Aveling Grange, till the chaste young heart was surrendered into the highwayman's keeping.

Perhaps old Mr. Hardcourt was not best pleased at Flavia's choice; but then, she was his life—his hope; and he trusted, even when he bestowed her on a husband, that her love and doting affection would still be his own. Besides, Mowbray was highly connected,—boasted of his wealth, whereas a very moderate portion of riches would be hers,—was received too in modish circles, into which the good old magistrate could never pretend to penetrate; and in short, what with Mowbray's high bearing, and his handsome person and insinuating tongue, Mr. Hardcourt had, without much reflection, irrevocably pledged himself to bestow his heart's treasure into the keeping of the profligate, who himself almost numbered years enough to have been the father of the young girl whom he testified the utmost impatience to call wife.

It was during the time that Mr. Mowbray was paying his court at Aveling, that the neighbourhood, lonely and sequestered, began to be alarmed by a series of highway robberies, unprecedented there, and which people said could only be perpetrated by that celebrated knight of the road, Captain de Montmorency. "Cudgel me, but we'll have him yet," said Mr. Hardcourt. "I should glory myself in going to Tyburn to see the fellow turned off. Ay, and I would take Flavia to see him go by in the cart, with a parson and a nosegay; eh, my little girl?"

"Oh no, father," said Flavia, "I could not abide it; though he is such a daring, wicked man, whose name makes me shrink with fear and terror whenever I hear it, yet I could never bear to see such a dreadful sight, it would haunt me till my death."

Does the gift of prophecy, involuntary though it be, lurk within us yet? Does the soul dimly shadow out its own fate, or rather that of its frail and perishable habitation? Sweet Flavia! unsuspecting, innocent girl! your lips then pronounced your own doom, as irrevocably as though you had been some stern sybil, delivering inscrutable, unquestioned oracles. Sweet Flavia! I have lived to see my kindred dust heaped on your fresh young form; and old and withered now, I can still remember the glow of your sweet, unsuspecting youth, radiant in unforeseeing love, happiness, and hope.

The betrothed were to visit London together. "But I shall not dare," said the girl, as walking in the old-fashioned Dutch garden, with its yews clipped in strange likenesses of animals and birds, she leant on her guilty lover's arm—"I shall not dare take such a journey for fear of the highwayman, De Montmorency."

"Fear not, my sweet Flavia; this breast shall be pierced through, ere De Montmorency shall cause one tremor in thine."

Richard, my own love, why do you leave us

so early every evening?—at sunset, I have remarked. These are not London habits. Ah! does any other than your poor Flavia attract you? Oh, Richard, I must die if it should be so. I could not live, and know you loved another."

"Sweetest and best! my purest love, could any win me from you, were she a queen? Think it not. I—I—the truth is, Flavia, I have a sick friend not far from here; he is poor, ill, and I—I—"

"Say no more, dearest. Oh! how much better I love you every day. How good, how noble, thus to sacrifice——" And the blushing girl clasped her lover's hand.

Ah! how differently beat those two human hearts:—one teeming with love, goodness, charity, sympathy; the other, dark with hypocrisy and crime.

They came to town, unmolested you may be sure—a circumstance the more strange, because a few days previously a terrible affair had occurred. Old Lord St. Hilary, the relic of the *beaux garçons* of former days, had been robbed and maltreated. Men were by no means so favoured as the fairer sex. Above all, a family jewel of immense value had been taken from his Lordship's person; and on recovering his wounds and fright, he swore implacable vengeance. He took the most active measures to fulfil his vow, and his rank and

wealth rendered this easier than it might have been to a commoner person.

Flavia came to our house to be measured for wedding-clothes—she was then the impersonation of radiant happiness. I was much struck with the girlish bride, and with the handsome, dark-browed, haughty gentleman who accompanied her and her friend, an old lady, cousin to her father, and at whose house the marriage was to take place. The clothes were made to order; saffron satin robes, trimmed with roses, according to a fancy of the bridegroom's, who was fond of the classics in his youthful days, and every preliminary was duly arranged.

* * * * *

On lagging wings, the happy day at length arrived. The ceremony had been performed, the company invited were assembled at the wedding feast, and the bridal pair were in the act of being toasted by the bride's father, when a strange noise was heard below; rude voices were upraised, and a rush made by many feet towards the festive saloon. The company rose.

"What is it?" said Mr. Hardcourt.

The door was thrown open for answer. The officers of justice entered the room. Two advanced, rough, uncourteous men. "Come, captain," said one, "the game is up at last. It's an awkward thing to arrest a gentleman on his wedding-day, but duty, my noble captain, duty must be done."

Astounded beyond resistance or appeal, the bridegroom was fettered; and the bride! she stood there as she had risen, her hazel eyes dilating, till they seemed about to start from her head. At last words came:—"Richard, what is this?"

"Scoundrels!" said Mr. Hardcourt, "release my son."

The men laughed coarsely. One of them was examining the necklace of Flavia, containing a diamond in the centre. "Where did you get this, Miss?" he said.

Her friends answered, for the terror-stricken girl was speechless—"Mr. Mowbray's wedding gift."

"Oh, oh! This was the diamond Lord St. Hilary was so mad about. By your leave, Miss"—and the gem was removed from the neck it encircled.

She comprehended something terrible. "For whom do you take Mr. Mowbray?" she at length convulsively asked.

"Whom? why the renowned captain—Captain De Montmorency."

A cry—so piercing in its agony as to cause the criminal to start—struck on the ears of all present; insensibility followed, and Flavia was removed. So was her bridegroom—to Newgate.

Accusations were numerous, and evidence of the

guilt unequivocal. Richard Mowbray was clearly convicted of the most desperate crimes. The trial was concluded—justice was appeased—the robber doomed.

And his innocent and stricken victim?—— For days her life had hung on a thread; but youth for a short time struggled with the fatal misery. She rallied. Reviving as from a dreadful dream, she could scarcely believe in the terrible event which, tornado-like, had swept over her. She desired her father to repeat its circumstances. Weeping, and his venerable grey hairs whiter with sorrow, Mr. Hardcourt complied. She heard the recital in silence. Presently, clasping her father's hand—"Dear father," she said, "when—when?" She could utter no more: nor was it necessary; he comprehended her meaning but too well.

"The day after to-morrow," he replied, hiding his face in his hands.

"Father, I must be there. Do you remember your jest? Ah, it has come to pass in bitter earnest. I must be there."

Nor would she be pacified; she persisted. Her physicians at length agreed to gratify her wish. It would, they said, be less dangerous than denial.

Near Tyburn, seats were erected. Windows, balconies were to be let on hire. One of the last, the most private, was secured; and on the fatal

morning, Flavia was taken thither in a close carriage, accompanied by her parent and her aged cousin. She shed no tears, appeared quite composed, and asked to be led to the window. The place of execution was not in sight, but the procession was about to pass immediately under the balcony. The fatal cart approached, it came on nearer and nearer, and the swelling murmur of a dense crowd rose on the air with appalling expression.

Flavia clenched her hands, and rose up, straining her form to catch a glimpse of the criminal. Yes, there he was, dressed gaily, the ominous nosegay flaunting in his breast, dull despair in his heart, reaching from thence to his haggard, pallid face.

The conveyance which constituted the terrible centre of attraction was now slowly moving on before Flavia's standing-place. The culprit cast a vacant, hopeless gaze about him. His hot, bleared eyes lighted on his bride—his pure and heart-stricken young wife. The wretched man uttered a cry of agony, and dashed himself down, fettered as he was, on the boards of the vehicle. As for her, she continued gazing, the look of recognition frozen on her face, her eyes glassy, motionless, and fixed.

They never resumed their natural intelligence. Senseless and stony, they bore her, stricken lamb! from that dismal scene. Her poor old father watched

for days by her bedside; looking for a ray of hope, a token of sense or sound. None ever came. She had been stricken with catalepsy; and it was a blessing when the enchained and suffering spirit was released from its frail habitation, to take its flight to happier regions.

Mr. Hardcourt sank shortly after into a state of childish imbecility; and in a few short years father and daughter slept in one grave.

The Lady's Revenge.

YOUNG, beautiful, accomplished, and even learned, was Miss Amarynth St. Quillotte, when she was deserted by her lover and affianced husband, Mr. Emerond, the celebrated philosopher and *fort esprit* of my young days. Above all, she was amazingly rich, her father having been a West Indian planter in the days when West India and wealth were terms synonymous. The young girl had been left an orphan at an early age, and educated in England; and at twenty-one, beautiful and a heiress, was secure, one would have supposed, of the constancy of any man. However, it proved otherwise. Whether Miss St. Quillotte's temper betrayed its intense and somewhat impetuous character too vividly to her lover, I know not; but Mr. Emerond, after an assiduous, and as all thought definite courtship, took the liberty of changing his mind. Withdrawing his attentions, he soon after married a portionless girl; and in a farewell letter to his deceived mistress, coolly told her he found that within his breast which forbade him to be the slave of any woman. The worst of it was,

he had taught Amarynth to love—and need I say what love is, when it dwells in the heart of an ardent young West Indian? It is more fervent and fatal in its consequences than colder minds can well imagine. When this love was slighted, and cast thanklessly back on her mortified spirit, there was a storm of passion kindled, not easily allayed nor brought within the limits of reason. "Am I so ugly, then?" soliloquized the discarded beauty, looking in her mirror. The image reflected might, it is true, have been more serene, but, in its own peculiar style, could scarcely have been more rare in its loveliness. A smooth olive skin, delicately tinted with the rose; eyes large, dark, soft, and yet glowing; hair long and silken; a form slight and elegant, with a mixture of Spanish and quadroon gracefulness; teeth—— but there, she was truly beautiful, and that must suffice. "Am I ugly?" she inquired. The mirror said No.

"But of what use is beauty," exclaimed Amarynth, "when a pale skin, yellow hair, and lack-lustre eyes have robbed me of all that life held most dear? Oh, Emerond! my girlhood's idol, my womanhood's pride; come back, yes, come back—I will forgive all." And poor Miss St. Quillotte woke up from her frantic apostrophes to find herself alone, the room in confusion, her brain excited almost to madness, her bosom overcharged with grief even to danger of suffocation. Her

maid proposed to send for a physician, and was threatened with a discharge for the suggestion. "Expose my wretchedness," said Amarynth, "to the eyes of the prying world? No! only leave me to my repose."

Miss St. Quillotte, however, slept not, but passed the night in meditation. She must be revenged—that she had determined on; her Creole blood demanded it. But how? To visit the guilty man with poison or a dagger was not what she desired; to kill herself would be futile, inasmuch as she would not be able, in that case, to ascertain how he bore the blow. No, she must wring his living heart; she must prove how little she felt the stroke which in reality had crushed her ardent and haughty spirit to the ground. She would marry. True, Mr. Emerond's was the only offer she had ever accepted. She had treated all other suitors with such disdain, that her reported shrewishness became indeed a scarecrow to her beauty. But still she supposed that she could attract somebody, no matter who—at least her money would. Yet! give up liberty, wealth, freedom of thought even, perhaps, and all to a man whom, be he what he might, she must loathe?—for the very name of man had suddenly become detestable. No, impossible; yet marry she must, and would. To die Miss St. Quillotte, and bequeath her wealth to strangers, was a bitter notion! There was no purer light shed on that rebellious

soul, no thoughts of gentle ministerings, holy charities, pious sympathies, of drying the mourner's tears. or soothing the bed of sickness and pain. The frightful picture of an old maid, which flitted in the darkness of her false imagination, was that of a splenetic being, revelling in cards and scandal; pampering over-fed dogs and cats, sneered at by her acquaintance, reviled by her enemies. "I can never come to that," she resumed, as this strong portrait rose before her eyes. "He shall not have that gratification. I will have a husband, but he shall be my tool, my slave; he shall be an image set up to sustain my dignity before the world, and he shall be obedient. Never, never can I love and honour any man after such treatment as I have experienced; never shall any man love me more—if man's love can indeed be anything but mere pretence."

Now this kind of scheme was all very well in theory, but practically it was extremely difficult of execution. Setting delicacy aside, if Amarynth really intended to reverse the general custom, and propose to some gentleman, still the only kind of proposal which she would agree to, that of entire control over her husband's opinions and actions, was not likely to meet with acceptation. She paused as the many difficulties of her revenge rose in array before her; then suddenly flashed a thought—Was it feasible? Yes! it must, it should be!

Not far from Miss St. Quillotte's residence, which was near the Green Park, she remembered to have noticed a young man, whose occupation was a sweeper of the crossing. Amarynth, who frequently, attended by the faithless Emerond, or at times a man-servant, promenaded in the park, had noticed this person, partly because he looked superior to his menial occupation, and partly because, when she doled out her charity, he appeared to reverence the beautiful Creole as something more than human. It was towards this creature of her bounty that her thoughts were now directed; certain the man was good-looking enough to be made a gentleman of, to hand her to her carriage, carry her fan in public, attend her to Ranelagh, the opera, the play-house, and to be set up to the world as a lawful defender and protector, and to wring the heart of *him*, the false, the vile, with indignant envy. He was poor, too—and she knew well that no rich or independent man could possibly be reduced to such a mere poodle's existence. She spent a day in consideration; and the next morning sent her woman to summon the sweeper. Much astonished was Mrs. Abigail, too, at her mistress's new whim: but her place was good; she was discreet, and made no remark, not even to her fellow-servants.

It was a bitter, piercing day in January, when Paul Meredith was ushered into the splendid mansion of Miss St. Quillotte.

Amarynth was not far out in her conjecture. The poor young fellow had feasted his eyes so often on her loveliness, that passion had been nourished in the breast of that ill-fed, half-elothed, hopeless youth. Miss St. Quillotte had become his sun, and when he saw not that vision of haughtiness and beauty, the brightest summer's day was dark enough to him. But further than nourishing her lovely image in his thoughts, more than daring to dream of her, or of wondering at her dainty elegance and beauty, he had never aspired even in imagination—it was not likely—the great and beautiful heiress, almost too grand for a poor man to speak to save with downcast eyes and humility of tongue—to notiee *him*, impossible. He knew, moreover, that the exquisitely-dressed gentleman who often attended was a favoured suitor—so eommon report had told the poor and humble sweeper; therefore, when he was shown into a noble room, replete with luxuries and elegance, he looked and wondered, and concluded he was about to become the objeet of one of those sudden and benevolent caprices with which fine ladies sometimes honour poor people. But in the midst of his bewilderments and wanderings a form appeared to him, alone—and oh, how fascinating in its shape! The rich furniture, the perfumed air of the luxurious apartment, the lovely and elegantly-dressed lady who stood there before

him, all combined to awe and abash the poor young man, who felt his unfitness to appear before such wealth and refinement; for though scrupulously clean in his coarse attire, his appearance was strangely out of character with all about him. Yet, abashed though he might stand there, Miss St. Quillotte, on her part, felt no less so. She was about for ever to annihilate her own self-esteem, and—she paused. At that minute it would have been easy to dismiss the wondering sweeper with an inquiry, a present, any excuse; but the memory of Emerond, his slights, her still deep love, her passionate regrets, her gnawing wish that he should be made to feel repentance, was paramount—and she adhered to her singular resolution. She spoke; Paul started as the cold, haughty accents fell on his astonished ear. Amarynth, who was easy enough to serve, and live with, would not for worlds have spoken in such a tone to one of her humblest domestics.

"You are poor!" said she, frowning as if denouncing a flagrant crime.

He raised his eyes—large and blue they were. Amidst his poverty, this young man afforded the purest type of the Saxon race in the pride of manhood. A tall, well-knit frame, light curly hair, a fair skin, with clear azure eyes, bright as a mirror. He raised them to her. "I *am* poor, madam, very; but I am honest." She curled her lip. Honesty, to her, was but a virtue of the

most plebeian order, the saving grace of the very abject.

"I do not suppose you are going to rob me," she answered. (A pause.) "How would you like to be rich?"

"Madam!" He was so surprised at such a question, his face flushed, he thought the rich beauty had sent for him to mock him for her amusement. He turned, and bowing, prepared to go.

"Stay!" said Miss St. Quillotte, reaching a chair, and sitting down, for she felt unequal to stand before his honest amazement any longer. "Stay; I have a great deal to say. I propose to bestow wealth on you—to make you rich—to make you, in short, a gentleman!"

"Madam!"

"Speak not, listen; I have things to say still more surprising: hear, but do not interrupt me. Do you comprehend, young man, how this wealth and station are to become yours? I will tell you; you must become—my husband."

It was fairly spoken now, and for some minutes a dead silence reigned. Neither could speak. Paul's face, which at the first receipt of this wonderful intelligence had lighted up with eagerness and joy, now subsided into gloom and doubt. Miss St. Quillotte's spirit rose.

"Perhaps," she said haughtily, "I am rejected?"

"For the second time," whispered revenge.

"Madam," said Paul Meredith, "I am but a poor man, earning a mere crust by the most degraded labour, but I have yet that in my keeping which is better in the eye of God"—he raised his eyes, those bright, unflinching eyes, reverently to heaven—"than wealth and rank; I mean, Madam, the honour of a man. I think I understand your ladyship;" here he blushed, stammered, hesitated: he was quite unskilled in the polite art of uttering disagreeable truths in an agreeable way. He continued—"My own poverty is irksome enough; I cannot bear the burden of a fine lady's shame."

Amarynth started up; her Creole blood swept with a deep flush over her brow, face, and bosom. Here was a humiliating mistake indeed; the youth fancied her guilty of actual crime, and seeking to conceal her dishonour with the shelter of a husband's name. It was not an unnatural error, after all. She recovered. At least here were noble qualities; stuff, which it is a pity are not oftener found in real well-born gentlemen. She forced herself to explain. "You are very bold," she said, disdainfully, "but you are mistaken. Listen;—he who sought my hand and fortune, and whom I have loved from girlhood, is false; by this time he has wedded another. My soul burns to be revenged, but the name and sight of man are hateful to me. You are poor; it will be something for you to be raised out of the

depth of poverty. The ceremony of marriage will confer on you some advantages which wealth can give. In the eyes of the world you will be my husband; to me, you must bind yourself by a written bond never to be more than you are at this present moment, standing there." She glanced around her proudly, though, to say truth, her pride at that minute was of the very basest kind—the pride of vulgar riches exulting in its power over honesty and virtue. Again there was silence. Paul's head bent down on his breast, his eyes fixed on the polished oak-floor. Miss St. Quillotte was exhausted; she rose up. "Remain here," she said, "for half an hour; deliberate on the advantages offered—an opportunity of fortune which few would reject in your circumstances. But make no mistake; you will be bound down strictly, and on the least attempt to alter the conditions of our contract, my wealth shall obtain a divorce, and you shall be cast forth to your original station. Remember, you will have the title of my husband, the fortune of a gentleman; but from myself, only the consideration of a patroness.

With this speech, calculated indeed to crush the most humble, she left the room, and the young man mused at this singular adventure. At first he was for starting off, and leaving the rich lady—whose image, purer and fairer far than the reality, had filled his bosom, and uncon-

sciously had elevated his thoughts far above his seeming station—to seek some tool better fitted for so humiliating a position; but there arose a picture which effectually chained him to that room, and held him down as it were with chains of iron. This picture presented a sick woman, whose tender love for her son had been, spite of their wretchedness and want, his saving angel, his guardian spirit. To bestow on her last few remaining days comforts and luxuries —to obtain medical aid and kind nursing,— all this constrained him to hesitate and doubt as to whether he should indeed throw by the golden chance fortune had so strangely offered him. Few in his rank and circumstances would have paused a moment; but Paul Meredith was one of those rare human plants which, grown and fostered in a wilderness of weeds, yet loses none of its original purity and fragrance in its forced contact with vile things. His father, a private soldier, had perished in the American war; and his mother, a delicate woman who had followed the camp, returned to England on the cessation of hostilities between that country and America, bearing with her her infant son, then between five and six years of age. Soon after her arrival in London, Mrs. Meredith, who had her own and her child's living to gain, was seized with rheumatic fever, and on her recovery she found she had lost the use of her lower limbs. Henceforth

the poor widow was bed-ridden. With the fortitude and courage which the poor so often display, she sought, by the aid of a kind neighbour or two, for needlework, and for a time managed to support herself and little Paul in decency. At length this resource—precarious in that day, as I hear it is said to be in later times—failed. Then she knitted articles for daily use, and the boy went about the streets of London vending them for their bread. During this time the poor widow, who as times went was a fair scholar, taught the boy to read and write, and to pray for their daily food: simple teachings, yet the seed was sown on good ground, and promised, in spite of its precocious and forced knowledge of the world, to bear the fruit of faith, honesty, and love.

Time passed—the widow and her son grew poorer each day; often fasting for long hours—he the sole attendant of her painful bed. The boy might, like his father, have entered the service of his country,—but could he leave his mother—she whose riches he was; whose only hope in this cold, bleak, and rugged world was the youth's filial love, which alone rendered supportable her trials and privations?

His mother, then, was the consideration which hindered Paul from departing out of Miss St. Quillotte's house faster than he had entered it. While he thought, and wondered, and hesitated, a servant entered bearing a salver laden with

luxurious fare. Alas! poor human nature! I may not paint thee better than thou really art; hunger and poverty drag down to earth the brightest and most soaring spirits. Paul ate and drank—looked wistfully at the dainties, as he thought of the dear invalid in their poor garret, and finally made up his mind to accept the heiress on her own terms.

After all, do not think so meanly of him; he was but four-and-twenty, and perhaps there burned a latent hope within him that the object of his silent and humble passion might one day repent of her resolve.

She returned, and desired to know if his mind was settled. He, not without much embarrassment, for he was unpractised in deceit, signified his acquiescence.

Amarynth's face brightened. After thus exposing her affairs to this young man, it would have been too dreadful to have been spurned by him. She placed a purse filled with gold in his hand, desired he would procure suitable attire, and return to her house at eight o'clock the next evening; "when," she said, "I will have the contract between us prepared, and ready for signature. After that I will inform you when the marriage ceremony is to take place.—Your name?" He blushed as he told it. He felt this mock-marriage was the only tarnish that honest name had known. She was pleased at its euphony. She had feared

some terrible, vulgar-sounding cognomen. "For the present," she said, with the air of a queen dismissing a courtier, "adieu. My woman will conduct you through the garden into the park. You will return to-morrow the same way; it is important that none of the servants should see you." And they separated, each with anxious thoughts: he to tell his mother this strange fortune; she to bribe and coax her lawyer, old Mr. Jeffries, whose aid was indispensable, into acquiescence with her strange whim.

Mr. Jeffries was a solicitor, who had had the care of Miss St. Quillotte's affairs ever since her minority. He was somewhat peculiar in manner, but kind-hearted and well skilled in the various infirmities of human nature. When Amarynth sent for him, and disclosing her forsaken plight, acquainted him also with her singular plan of revenge, he, first of all, deliberately gazed at his client as she paced up and down her spacious library, which, being a *savante*, she used much as her usual sitting apartment, and then quietly decided that her temperament was excited to slight insanity. He soon found, however, that the form of her mental disease was that of obstinacy; and it is certain that if all the obstinate people in the world were to be placed under surveillance, the free population would be alarmingly reduced. He next deliberated how he might prevent the rash deed she meditated. I must, however, explain that Miss

St. Quillotte kept silent as to the recent occupation of her intended spouse. Mr. Jeffries was led to suppose him respectable, though obscure. Never was there such a wearisome affair. It took two good hours to explain every circumstance to the old lawyer; and then he insisted, with the caution and circumspection of age, in going over every individual circumstance again. At last Amarynth fairly lost her temper. "Do as you please," she said; "either draw up the contract and settlements as I shall dictate, or I will withdraw my affairs from your hands and employ some stranger, who will neither question my will nor my judgment." Mr. Jeffries smiled, and acceded to her wish with polite readiness, adding in a significant undertone, "I wish you may not repent, my dear"—which being rightly interpreted meant, "I think you will." He then sent for his clerk, and, under the suggestion of Miss St. Quillotte, a deed of contract and settlement was drawn up.

It would, of course, be impossible for me to transcribe that deed. It contained a contract of marriage between Amarynth St. Quillotte and Paul Meredith on the terms she had proposed:—that, in consideration of three thousand pounds per annum to be settled on the said Paul, he should entirely forego and resign the authority of a husband: that he was to attend her in public—but in private they were to occupy separate suites of

rooms, renouncing all companionship of domestic life, save at dinner, or on the occasion of visitors being present; this last clause dependent on the will of the said Amarynth St. Quillotte. In fine, the young husband, or rather partner, was so hemmed in with conditions, that Mr. Jeffries, who took on this occasion twice his accustomed quantity of snuff, intimated "that the person must be a perfect fool who could sign such a deed." The divorce threat was likewise to be enforced on the failure of the slightest of these conditions. The deed was not quite finished, when Mrs. Abigail, entering the room, requested the presence of her mistress.

Amarynth whispered to her for a moment, and the woman quitted the apartment, returning immediately, and ushering in a young man, on whom Miss St. Quillotte looked with unfeigned surprise. Well-made, fashionable clothing had converted Paul Meredith—not into a beau, but a gentleman. There was little about him to reveal his original state but his hard and brown hands. It was gratifying, but she took no further notice of the young man, than to reflect it was a good thing he looked so well. Mr. Jeffries, however, looked from one to the other of these young people. After a vast pinch of snuff, he quietly wrote a memorandum and handed it to his clerk. The deed, by Miss St. Quillotte's desire, concluded with a solemn form of declaration, by which both

parties bound themselves to observe the conditions inscribed therein. Mr. Jeffries read over the parchment, and the contractors signed it. It was not without some trepidation that Amarynth beheld Paul approach the table for this purpose; but to her relief he *could* write his name, and that in a bold, round hand, which would not have disgraced a merchant. During all this time he scarcely looked at his affianced wife, who on her part regarded him as little. Business over, the bride elect named two days thence for the ceremony, which was to be strictly private; then all parties separated, to meet no more till the wedding-day, when they were to be united at Mr. Jeffries' house by special license.

That day came, and Paul Meredith, the crossing-sweeper, was united in marriage to Miss Amarynth St. Quillotte, the great West Indian heiress. The remainder of his wedding-day was spent by the bridegroom in the apartment of his bed-ridden mother, for whom he had taken comfortable rooms. Amarynth spent hers in tears, sighs, and perpetual revertings to the man of her heart—now lost for ever. A brilliant and a happy wedding it was truly!

Mrs. Meredith had no reason to fear her husband's intrusion—he never approached her, except when she summoned him to attend her abroad, and then it was, apparently, anything but a pleasure to him. The marriage had been duly announced, but no company or congratulations solicited. Paul

engaged a gentleman to come daily and instruct him in various branches of knowledge, during his hours of leisure. When the young man escorted his haughty young wife, he could not avoid seeing how she was admired. Amarynth's marriage, indeed, seemed the signal for homage and adoration of all kinds from the other sex being lavished on her. Some of these gallants strove to win the husband into intimacy, but that young gentleman, for so he now was in the eyes of the world, avoided all society, except that of his mother and his tutor. And time moved on.

Mrs. Meredith drank deeply of dissipation: wearisome were the balls, the ridottos, the *fêtes*, the parties at faro, she dragged her reluctant husband to. Paul soon tired of fashionable life. People wondered at his quiet placidity, and passed on; it was nothing to the world, the distant terms that Mr. Meredith and his beautiful wife appeared on. Paul satisfied himself that Amarynth's reputation was indeed intact. She flirted, it is true, and delighted in the thought that she sometimes, with her wit, learning, and beauty, raised in some foolish heart a genuine flame, which she would encourage to the last, and then turn round and trample on the unfortunate as—she reflected —her heart had been trampled on. She little dreamed that of all who dwelt on her charms and delighted in her brilliant conversation, her husband was the most devoted and the most hopeless. How,

indeed, could a man see that lovely creature in all the *retenue* and finish of her fascinations, and not love her, even if he had not done so from the first? He loved her, indeed, differently from the time when she used to give him silver at the crossing; but not less passionately—far more so.

Amarynth strove to keep within her heart the image of Emerond—for the sake of constancy, I grieve to say, that image grew daily fainter and fainter. It was, after all, but a waxen one, which the very heat of resentment gradually melted. In spite of herself, his name no longer caused the blush, nor the throbbing of the heart, which used to follow on hearing it. I verily believe his existence would have been entirely forgotten, but for the vast heap of his letters and the lock of his hair which she sometimes gazed on in her lonely moments. About this time, Amarynth's interest was excited by elegant bouquets which were sent to her, accompanied with verses, which her cultivated literary taste told her were far better than the hackneyed bombast of the love lays of her day. The versification was not the smoothest, perhaps, but the sentiments were fresh, spontaneous, and evidently from the heart. Sometimes they imitated the verse of Horace and Virgil. These compositions dwelt greatly on the writer's ardent but hopeless love. She soon entertained an intense curiosity to see her unknown adorer. She inquired respecting the messenger, who brought these pas-

sionate effusions. No one knew. Every morning they were found on the marble table in the great hall passage, but no one, strange to say, could tell from whence the offerings emanated. Amarynth's thoughts wandered over her household, but there was no one in it with the least pretensions to reading or writing save old Dobbs, the house steward, and from him such things as flowers and verses were very unlikely. She was being handed to her coach one day by Mr. Meredith, when the mystery was solved. A small edition of Virgil dropped out of his vest, and a paper in it floated to the feet of Amarynth. It was in the hand-writing of the unknown. This, then, was the secret; quick as lightning it flashed on her, but she affected not to see; and as Paul, in some confusion, picked up the paper, she glanced at him, and could not but marvel at the polish of his appearance.

Mrs. Meredith was lost in thought all that evening. Next day, Mr. Meredith sent her a hurried message—his mother was dying; would she spare his services till all was over? She desired to speak with him. He came, in disorder and agitation. All her beauty could not for one moment now attract his notice. "She is all I have in the world to love," he said. How chill those words fell on Amarynth's heart. "Stay," she said, hesitating; "I will go with you." He bowed, but expressed neither joy nor thanks. The coach

was called, and for the first time Mrs. Meredith beheld her mother-in-law. The poor woman was sinking rapidly when they arrived. Paul whispered to her as he supported her dying head; she raised her eyes to Amarynth. "Ah, madam," said she, "let me thank you for all your goodness; but oh! you know not what a heart you have slighted!" The poor mother grew speechless soon after, and expired on her son's bosom. Amarynth fainted, and knew not how she was taken home.

The lady and her husband did not meet till the funeral was over. He started to see her black attire. "You are too good, madam," he said. Did she wish he had said something more?—After all, she must own, he observed the terms she had dictated somewhat too literally—her vanity, ever sensitive, began to be wounded. Things, however, went on much as usual; the flowers and the sonnets, though, had ceased to arrive, and Amarynth was fain to console herself with those she had. It was strange how they began to supersede Emerond's letters. I think it was a month or two after, that Mrs. Meredith went to her bureau, seized those letters, and burnt them every one, finishing the bonfire with the lock of hair. Mrs. Abigail received a hint one day, accompanied by a new paduasoy sacque, and soon afterwards a lock of sunny hair was suspended in a locket, and worn next Amarynth's heart. How the waiting woman got it was best known to herself; perhaps

Mr. Peruke, who dressed Mr. Meredith's hair, could have informed the curious inquirer.

Who can date the growth of love? In the history of the passions, time is trampled on. We may experience that to-day, which yesterday we had deemed utterly impossible. The son of Venus, and the son of Nox and Erebus, were not more different than Amarynth's first passion, and the pure love which began so gradually to steal over her heart. The one had led to violence, anger, revenge,—the other was exalted and intense, yet subdued and chastened in its character. That fatal contract, that oath, were the death of the happiness she might have known. She would have ceased almost entirely to go out, but that those occasions were the only ones on which she could feast herself with the presence of her husband. Be sure Mrs. Abigail, who was a very shrewd gentlewoman, soon found out the bent of her lady's mind; she, unbidden, related anecdotes of Mr. Meredith, his goodness, his charities, his self-denials. Amarynth would hear this until she could bear no more; she would send her maid away, and burying her face among the cushions of a couch, indulge in weeping repentance. Oh, child, grieving for thy neglected and disdained toy! who can relieve or pity thee?

One day she was startled by a request from her husband,—how she loved that word now, and would breathe it, as something precious and con-

soling,—to have a private audience. Mrs. Abigail brought the message, looking very distressed. "What is the matter?" said her mistress. "The poor gentleman—my dear master—looks so ill—fear—die;" and Mrs. Abigail burst into tears. Amarynth wept for sympathy. "Let him come," she said, "directly." He was certainly much altered, and yet there was an unwonted pride in his whole bearing. She felt, rich woman and beauty as she was, her inferiority.

"Madam," he said, strongly but sternly agitated, "I have come to—to ask a favour, and to make a confession." She started. "Though I loved you long, long ere you took me a poor man from the streets, yet my love is no longer to be borne. If I stay here, I must go mad or die. Oh, madam, that contract! think you I would have signed it, but for the sake of my dear mother who was perishing in my sight, when you raised me from the depths of poverty? Forgive my love; I cannot help it. I have come to request you will do me one parting favour—purchase me a commission. I would be a soldier, madam; my father was one—a brave, though a poor one: but I came not to trouble you with my family remembrances. I can live, madam, on my pay; your allowance I beg permission to relinquish."

"Wherefore?" Thus much, though choked, she contrived to say.

He went on: "I cannot longer subsist on your

bounty. I have made such progress, madam, in educational acquirements of late—your wit and accomplishments stimulated me. I cannot vie with your learning; but now I may pass unnoticed for ignorance. Forgive me, madam, and sometimes deign to cast a thought on him who adores you, silent and hopeless." Oh, how she longed to cast herself at his feet, to own her deep, her unalterable love—to bid him live for her; but the freezing thought of the terms she had vowed to adhere to sealed her lips! She could not speak; he mistook her silence for anger, and drooped his head. "Go," she murmured. He said no more, and withdrew.

The commission was purchased, and Paul left England with an aching heart, but with a determination to win himself a name, or bravely die.

Oh! bitterness of bondage, in which the next two years passed. Amarynth, however, frequently heard of him. In 1780 a war commenced against Holland. Paul signalized himself; he was rapidly promoted. At last she saw him gazetted with high military rank. Alas! what cause was there for exultation! Now he was free of her,—independent. She had long since discontinued to go into public. She felt daily growing weaker. At last the thought occurred that if she died, some one must inherit her wealth. Strange not to have thought of it before. She sent to Mr. Jeffries, and communicating to him her love and wretched-

ness, conjured him to make her will. The old lawyer asked many questions; he seemed actually to gloat over Mrs. Meredith's distress. "He is coming home," he said; "I saw the arrival of the transport announced."

"Home! what home has he?" she bitterly asked. "At any rate he may be in time to see me die."

"Pooh! pooh!" said Mr. Jeffries, in the most unfeeling manner; "you'll live long enough, I warrant, to make the man's heart ache worse than it does now."

Ten days after the will was made, Mr. Jeffries drove up to Amarynth's door. An officer was with him. The servants crowded round, for they had recognised their master. They entered the library; Amarynth started up. She, too, knew that beloved face, brown and scarred though it was. Oath, or no oath, her impulse was obeyed; her arms were round his neck; her tears fell on his manly cheeks; she called him—husband.

He pressed her to his heart; words failed them both, they were awakening, after that indulgence of suppressed love, to the fatal remembrance of their vows.

"One farewell," said Paul, "and I go."

"Fiddlestick!" said Mr. Jeffries, flinging his brown periwig right into the middle of the floor, and capering about. "I, stupid, prosy, old lawyer though I be, foresaw this hour when I was manufacturing that rigmarole of a deed. You heard

me read it once; hear it again: I just introduced a sentence which will set all things to rights." The oath was registered with a saving clause, that if both parties mutually agreed at any time to renounce the conditions of the deed, and become man and wife actually, instead of a mere legal fiction, the said agreement was, by mutual consent, to be null and void.

Mr. Jeffries was not heard to the end of his preamble. Locked in each other's arms, Paul and Amarynth, now lavishing on one another the dear titles of wife and husband, forgot any presence but their own; and, amidst mutual forgiveness and confessions, and utterance of affection, Mr. Jeffries, quietly picking up his periwig, went down to announce to the assembled servants that their lady desired them to drink the Colonel's health in a gallon bowl of punch. It would have done you good to have heard the shout. The happy couple heard it not. They were too absorbed in each other.

I have no more to relate. Mr. and Mrs. Meredith have long since been dust and ashes, but their descendant, Paul Meredith, Esq., lives on his own estate in ——shire, and perpetuates the virtues, the noble simplicity, the unostentatious charities of his progenitors.

La Marquise de Laurinoy.

I BECAME acquainted with many ladies of the French *noblesse*, who came over to England as refugees in the memorable French Revolution of 1789. I had at that time retired from any very active share in our business, although I still superintended its details, and kept its accounts. Best of all those noble and unfortunate persons who took shelter in our country from the barbarism of their own, do I remember her whose title heads this narrative; Madame La Marquise de Laurinoy.

When M. de Laurinoy and his youthful wife fled to England, no longer able to brave the terrible scenes of revolutionary Paris, she had attained the age of nineteen, and M. Le Marquis was sixty. Madame had then been married three years, having only left the educational convent to become the wife of this aged nobleman. Rosine de Melicourt had, however, never dreamt of resisting her parents' decree. It seems so inevitably to be the destiny of a French girl of rank to wed con-

ventionally, that perhaps she had never asked her heart the question, if love was an essential ingredient in matrimony. She looked on the old Marquis as a second father, kinder only, probably than the haughty Count de Melicourt had ever been; and the mourning over for her parents' death, which took place soon after her marriage Rosine prepared innocently to enjoy the pleasures and advantages which her wealth and rank afforded her.

But the dreadful storm, long hovering over devoted France, burst forth when she had been but three years a wife. Its wild tornado and lightning-flashes scattered the innocent scarcely less than the guilty. M. de Laurinoy was an inoffensive nobleman, inclining to peaceful and elegant pursuits, proud of his beautiful young wife, and indulgent to her almost to a fault But no indulgence could spoil Rosine's sweet and loving disposition. She repaid her husband's kindness by attention to the whims and caprices of his age, and by regarding him as one of the best and wisest of men; and M. de Laurinoy who was by no means secure of his claims to notice on the score of talent, felt greatly soothed and reassured by this implicit faith of his lady's and by it was subsequently much elevated in his own opinion, if not in that of the world at large.

Some wives, indeed, would have perhaps been less amiably complaisant about an incumbrance

which existed in the Marquis's family at the time of his second marriage. Some years before that event took place, M. de Laurinoy had contracted a friendship with Mr. Gervais, a young Englishman, who afterwards married one of his own countrywomen, against the inclinations of his family; which act of disobedience ruined him, and he ultimately died of disappointed hopes and a broken heart. The very being for whose sake he had renounced his fairest hopes, had become alienated by his poverty, and quitted him some time before his death, leaving with him their only child.

Poor Gervais, recollecting his early friend De Laurinoy, wrote to him when on his death-bed, and implored him to take the child, whom he could neither bequeath to his own offended family, nor entrust to the mother who had already deserted him. The Marquis, ever benevolent, readily accepted this trust. The poor father soon after breathed his last, and the boy arrived in charge of an old nurse at M. de Laurinoy's chateau.

At the period of the Marquis's marriage with Mademoiselle de Melicourt, the protégé was a healthy but somewhat pensive and delicate boy of ten. But Rosine never dreamt of encumbrance. Fond of children, as most young girls are, she played with the little fellow, read to him, worked for him, amused him, and loved him dearly as something to create an interest in life. For his part, he, poor

child, soon loved Madame de Laurinoy, who, with her beautiful face, delicate hands, and gentle voice, might well pass for an angel compared to the old Scotchwoman, Nurse Graeme, who had come from England with him, and who appeared to believe that her voluntary exile was only to be atoned for by perpetual grumblings and scoldings. This woman constantly twitted the boy with his mother's ingratitude and want of affection, and irritated his childish sensibility, until he would frequently walk away into some grassy thicket of the park, and bewail his hard fate, that he had only a dead father and a wicked mother. Rosine seemed to come purposely to save the child from destruction, for M. de Laurinoy was perfectly satisfied if he saw the boy well fed and well clothed, and dreamed not that he might be exposed to worse things than physical deprivation, though, to one of his disposition, the total absence of love in his daily life and education was likely to be fatal.

A stern old Abbé came every day to attend to his mental requirements, the Marquis forbidding any intermeddling with his spiritual training, that being safe and orthodox in the hands of Nurse Graeme; though William Gervais, if older, would have probably revolted from any religion which took such severe and repulsive forms as the Presbyterian dogmas of the rigid Scotchwoman. May we not often trace in the scoffer and un-

believer the lessons of the human instructor who will not teach that God himself is love?

But Rosine smoothed all those asperities which the young heart naturally rejected. She spoke of the sacrifice of the Saviour; she placed that Divine picture in the glowing colours so attractive to a child. She inculcated implicit faith and obedience, and taught the boy to serve his Almighty Father with good deeds as well as fervent prayer. Oh, woman! would ye but recognise such teachings as your truest and most enduring mission, sowing the good seed, and waiting humbly for the fruit to arise from the stony and oft-times unfertile ground, leaving the gathering to the Great Reaper in His own good time. It is probable that Madame de Laurinoy might not have considered the great work she was doing, but she did it, and from the purest and simplest motives. After *her* instruction, William Gervais no longer said his prayers as a dull penance. He prayed for her, and with her,—and all creeds, all distinctions melted away in that teaching of faith and love.

William, as he grew older, reflected often on his position: he used to wonder what was ultimately to become of him,—how long it would be ere he should be a man, and independent. He grew more reserved after a year or two, and used to look grave when Madame de Laurinoy, in her girlhood's joyous spirits, would volunteer a youthful game.

He would, on these occasions, shake his head, and bringing a book, ask her to construe a difficult passage by a French author, or comment on some dear English writer.

* * * * * *

So time passed. M. de Laurinoy talked much of getting William made a page of honour to Marie Antoinette; but the earthquake, which shook Europe to its foundations, already began to make itself heard like the far-off rumblings of a volcanic outbreak,—and the Marquis's intention was put off from day to day, until, when William was nearly thirteen, there arrived one morning at the chateau a letter for M. de Laurinoy. It related to William Gervais.

Amazement! His mother had claimed him. She had gone, it appeared, to reside with some great lady, a former connexion of hers, as companion. The great lady, aged and imbecile, but who bore no meaner title than that of duchess, was dead. Mistress Gervais (who must have played her cards well), after a period given to decency and the opinion of the world, had been wooed by the Duke, and not in vain. The treacherous and selfish wife of poor Gervais was now Her Grace the Duchess of Garstone; and, from some curious and whimsical motive, she now claimed her hitherto neglected and uncared-for son.

The Marquis was by no means disposed to

part with the boy. Rosine's tears and the youth's own repugnance would have decided M. de Laurinoy to make a struggle to keep him, but the Revolution had just declared itself in all its blood-thirsty horrors. None could foresee the end, and therefore, in consideration of William's after destiny, M. le Marquis decided that he should go. He was accordingly given into the charge of an English gentleman. Nurse Graeme was pensioned, and William, with downcast spirit, at length parted from the protectors of his helpless youth.

They received many subsequent letters from England, stating William's prospects and his satisfaction. And then, letters—news—interests,—all—all were lost in one great and sanguinary confusion.

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It would be useless here to recapitulate events which historians have described so well, and which most readers know. Three years after a marriage which, at its celebration, held out the brightest prospects of continuance in wealth and station, Rosine de Laurinoy and her husband landed in England, with but little money and few friends; and, without property, or certain means of any kind for the future, were thrown on the wide world. They, who had been reared in the hot-house of wealth, refinement, luxury,—who

had never understood the meaning of that gaunt, stark word, Want,—now stood alone in a strange land—a helpless old man, and a weak, delicate girl!

* * * * * *

It was one morning in a foggy English spring, that our house, of whom my daughter was now the active head and partner, received an order from Madame la Marquise de Laurinoy. Even in their precipitous flight from France, the Marquis had found time to get a few letters of introduction to some of the English nobility. Madame, who had escaped with but limited change of dress, desired to be measured for a suit to visit in. It so happened that none of our hands could be spared to take the order, being at that period very busy in preparing for a drawing-room; and Betsy, my daughter—who was now a middle-aged woman, and the mother of many children—was pining for a breath of fresh air, and determined to wait herself on Madame la Marquise. She directed her steps, according to the address she had received, towards a street in the purlieus of Leicester Square, and at a mean-looking house, discovered M. and Madame de Laurinoy. The French *emigrés* of those days were glad of any shelter, and submitted to abodes alike repulsive to their former habits and tastes.

Betsy was shown up-stairs to Madame's apartment by a young French girl, Rosine's sole atten-

dant; and my daughter, when she returned home, expressed her extreme surprise at the youth and loveliness, despite even her anxious and depressed air, of Madame de Laurinoy.

La Marquise knew no more of the value of money, how far it went in expenditure, or how to use it economically, than a child; yet for all that, Betsy observed she started when the estimate of her dress and trimmings was laid before her. My daughter, who had a great deal of good feeling, correct judgment, and clever tact, guessed how matters were; those mean lodgings, the anxiety of Madame's manner, and the distressed state of most of the French *noblesse* who sought our shores for refuge, convinced her that here there were no funds to spare for fine and rich dresses. So, as delicately as she could, Betsy hinted to Madame de Laurinoy what kind of material would be perfectly suitable for her to wear when she saw company; and at the same time named something, you may be sure, far more economical than the costume first selected by Rosine. She thanked Betsy, and desired to leave the matter entirely to her taste, which indeed she might very well do. So my daughter with her own hands measured Madame la Marquise, and booked the order. Our house executed it for the mere cost of the materials. "We must," I remarked, when Betsy told me all I have detailed above, "do something

for the poor refugees; we cannot do better than commence here."

The noble pair, through their letters of introduction, were asked to a few grand dinners, for which they were almost unable to find funds for the hair-dresser—an indispensable adjunct to visiting then—or the sedan-chairs which conveyed them to and fro; and at that point terminated these acquaintances. When Betsy next inquired, the De Laurinoys had left the dingy lodgings, it was too probable for others still more uncongenial. M. de Laurinoy had been peculiarly marked, by the Revolutionary party, for his firm adherence and personal affection for Louis the Sixteenth and Marie Antoinette; and no chance existed of rescuing any portion of the Marquis's confiscated estates.

The worthy exiles did not deem a formal introduction to the Duchess of Garstone necessary, but called, unceremoniously, on the mother of the youth to whom they had generously given protection and succour. The Duchess, a beautiful but haughty and frigidly cold woman, received them in their misfortune with unfeeling dignity; "was concerned for their reverses, hoped soon to see them restored," etc., etc.; and would have bowed and curtsied them away, but that Rosine had determined to see William.

"Your Grace's son," she said, almost as coldly as the Duchess spoke, "has not, I am sure,

forgotten us. You will, I trust, permit us to see him."

The fine lady bowed, and rang for her footman. "Tell Mr. Gervais he is wanted;" a look of intelligence passing to the domestic at the same time, which he perfectly comprehended. The man returned—Mr. Gervais was from home. "You perceive, Madame la Marquise," said the Duchess, "William would of course be charmed —but——"

"I *do* see, Madame," answered Rosine. "My dear Marquis, let us relieve this lady from our intrusive presence; doubtless, it is distressing to the Duchess to remind her by it of past events."

She curtsied when she spoke, as only one, even so young and usually so gentle as herself, could have done, who had learnt to practise conventional disdain at Versailles. Rosine had seen the Queen of France repulse the arrogant and malignant, and the lesson had not been lost on her.

"I will give any message you please to my son," quoth the Duchess, slightly abashed.

"We will not trouble you, Madame; 'tis plain your memory is already too much burthened." More courtesies, more etiquettes and hollow regrets, and M. le Marquis handed his lady to her chair, and then entered his own.

One evening the Marquis and his wife were meditating on what they could possibly do for a

livelihood. Every day brought poverty still closer and closer, till her embrace threatened to crush them entirely; and they were thinking deeply, without much consolation in that reflective process, when they heard a short, sharp parley held below, a rush up the narrow stair-case, and William Gervais — hardly, in his impatience, waiting for the ceremony of knocking— burst into the small, ill-furnished room. It was but the work of an instant for him warmly to greet the old Marquis, to kiss his withered and trembling hands, bow lowly and reverently to Rosine, and then to ask the pardon of both for his mother's haughty insolence and ingratitude.

"*N'importe, mon brave garçon,*" said the aged nobleman, "since you are true. My poor Rosine though, has nearly broken her heart about your supposed forgetfulness."

William glanced shyly at Madame de Laurinoy the blood flew into his cheek—he hastened to explain. He said he had not heard even of their arrival in England, nor should he have known it now, but for a chance acquaintance who had seen and conversed with the Marquis.

"Forget the Chateau!" he exclaimed with enthusiasm,—"the Hotel de Laurinoy! And you, Madame—could you, then, think thus ill of me?"

Rosine had observed him earnestly during this time. He had grown into a handsome youth just past his fourteenth year, but was more shy

and reserved, after his first outbreak of joy at seeing them, than ever. He wished to speak of his family matters still more at length. "The Duke of Garstone," he said, "was very liberal, and in most respects treated him as an adopted son; but his mother kept a severe surveillance over him." With all his ingenuity, he could not ignore the fact that the Duchess detested the very name even of De Laurinoy;—why, it was indeed difficult to surmise; since, if she really possessed any sort of maternal feeling, she should have been grateful to those who sheltered her son in his hour of need.

Glancing around, William Gervais could not avoid seeing how matters stood with his beloved friends. His gratitude, his generosity, here fairly conquered his shyness. He delicately intimated that he had a handsome allowance, which he begged them to share until M. de Laurinoy recovered his estates.

They both smiled mournfully—but Rosine, who feared that, for her sake, her husband's resolution might give way, interfered. "M. le Marquis," she said, "that must never be. William must see us no more—our paths are quite separate. Let us at once say farewell."

M. de Laurinoy acquiesced. "Never, my dear boy," he said. "What! live on alms-giving? No, I can work; I am quite strong yet, you see; and we need very little—I especially."

"Work! tottering, silver-haired, and feeble! Need little?—with that enervated frame!" William passionately intreated; he knelt at Rosine's feet, where as a child he had learnt to pray. He would have died for her at that moment, could his death have restored her to wealth, happiness, and station.

But they were inflexible. He was compelled at last to take a sorrowful leave, not, however, without telling them that he should visit them again. A week after that, he again visited the mean dwelling. They were gone, no one could tell whither. For long years he sought them in vain.

* * * * * *

Seven years after that visit, my daughter was sitting by herself in the work-room, one November evening, inventing patterns, at which she was very clever. It was a slack time just then, and the last workwoman had been dismissed, and little Mary was on her mother's knee, when Betsy was aroused from her meditations on blue and rose-coloured ribands, by the maid's announcement that a woman wished to see her.

"What kind of person?" asked Betsy, putting down her little daughter; "and what is her name?"

"She would only tell her name, ma'am, to yourself," said the girl.

"Bring candles," said my daughter, "and

show the person in here." She was obeyed, and Jenny and the lights preceded the entrance of a young woman, who appeared strongly agitated, and whose shabby attire led Betsy immediately to conclude that she came to ask charity.

When Jenny withdrew, my daughter approached to ask her name, and then beheld—spite of her poor dress and haggard looks—Madame la Marquise de Laurinoy. "Can it be?" was Betsy's exclamation—"Madame la Marquise!" My daughter had the rare faculty of never forgetting any person whom she had once beheld.

"You remember me, I perceive," said Madame de Laurinoy in the old voice of surpassing sweetness, which had so struck Betsy at her first interview. "Alas! Madam, I have come to ask you to—to—employ me—do not refuse," she said, clasping her hands in supplication. "My husband is—I had almost said I fear, but I have more cause to rejoice—on his death-bed. His existence of late has indeed been a bitter one. He wants necessaries," she said sobbing, "that I cannot give him. We have no friends. I can embroider beautifully—the Queen of France herself used to admire my work; surely, surely, if you will but try me I can earn something."

Betsy wept with the unfortunate lady, and assured her that our house would gladly accept her services; and in truth needlework was so much worn at that time, that clever hands were in

much request. My daughter left her guest for a few minutes, to consult with me, sending her meanwhile some chocolate and a large plate of cake. Madame told us afterwards that no food had passed her lips the whole day previously.

It appeared when they quitted the lodgings near Leicester Square, M. de Laurinoy contrived to get a few pupils to learn the French language. Afterwards, by slow degrees, he got a little school together, in which Madame de Laurinoy assisted him. In that irksome employment had seven years of her bright youth and beauty been spent; but she murmured not—the Marquis himself was employed, and even cheerful. For the last three months, however, he had been bowed down by sickness, the school was dispersed, and the poor exiles were penniless, hopeless, and likely to starve. They had only removed to a distant suburb, but had concealed their residence effectually. Any hope of return to France was futile; and while their hearts bled for the martyrs of the Revolution, they themselves were tasting some of its bitterest fruits.

We gave Madame de Laurinoy as much work as she could do, and I, who was cash-keeper, made a pretence to pay for it beforehand. She took the money gratefully. "I can never repay your kindness," she said, "save by serving you

faithfully:" and indeed she was the most punctual and scrupulous of workwomen. We persuaded her to hire a nurse for the poor old Marquis, for her own strength was well nigh exhausted, and needed all the reviving which Betsy's delicate jellies and soups could give, some of which were always at her disposal.

The Marquise's embroidery was exquisite, and many a noble lady's attire received its most delicate embellishment from her fingers.

She brought home one evening some work,—for the tenderly-nurtured lady, who in Paris would not have ventured abroad after nightfall on foot, or unattended, walked alone through our London streets at late hours,—and seemed in a state of great excitement. "I have been followed," she exclaimed with much distress—"some man watched me to this door, and then departed. What shall I do—it is so far to return home. M. de Laurinoy is worse—indeed I fear he will not wear through the night." She sat down, and wept silently. Betsy, who was always in earnest and decided, desired Jenny to call a coach, and packed a basket with plenty of good and useful necessaries. When the coach was brought, "Now, Madame," said she, "I will return home with you and remain all night. My mother, I know, will spare me. If M. le Marquis recovers I will return, if not you will need some one to be with you in your sorrow. Madame de

Laurinoy's remonstrances being but feeble, they departed for the refugee's abode, northwards of the great metropolis.

The poor old Marquis breathed his last towards the morning of that sorrowful night; and in her twenty-sixth year Rosine was left a widow, though indeed scarcely so helpless a widow as she had been a wife.

Betsy determined to remain with her as long as she could, and set about with her usual earnestness to make arrangements for the funeral of M. de Laurinoy. We held ourselves as security to an undertaker, and the Marquis was respectably interred in a churchyard at Islington.

After the funeral, we persuaded the widow to take fresh apartments, where she pursued her new occupation; and thereby was enabled to support herself in comfort, and with some degree of hope for the future.

She would have been happy, but for one annoyance—that was, a persuasion that the strictest surveillance was kept upon her actions, that she was constantly watched by some one ever at hand. She became afraid to go out, and my little granddaughter Mary used to go to and fro, fetching and carrying Madame de Laurinoy's exquisite embroidery. At last, in a hand too well remembered, came a letter, containing notes to the amount of a hundred pounds,—no signature, only addressed "to Rosine." Then suddenly a light dawned on

her, and she knew whose steps dogged her so continually. "Poor boy," she said to me one day, having previously told all I have related,—"I know his heart was always with us. Is his haughty mother still alive, and is he still dependent on her?" She received another letter soon after; it ran thus:—

"MADAME,—I can no longer rest without seeing you once more, without hearing your dear voice pronounce a pardon. Yet for what?—did not you yourself pronounce the doom which has shortened my youth, which throws gloom over my maturer years, the doom of banishment from your presence, exclusion from the privilege of soothing your sufferings? I know my dear, dear benefactor is no more. Perhaps my exile was a wiser thing than you knew it to be. Ah, Madame, see me once, I implore,—grant me a few moments of the presence which blessed my happy childhood's years.

WILLIAM GERVAIS."

"What shall I do?" said Madame de Laurinoy to me. "The youth," I replied, "appears to me love-sick." Rosine coloured deeply "Madame Taffetas," she answered, in her pleasant broken English—"fie—William is young enough to be my—my—" she paused. "Not your son, I hope," said I, laughing; "the difference in your ages

forms no important disparity. My dear Madame de Laurinoy, if I in my daily experience saw no marriages more incompatible than this, I——" "Nay! Madame," said Rosine rising up, "I will not hear such folly. However, I will see him, and say farewell for ever."

They had an interview some days after that, rather a painful one, if I may judge from Rosine's excited detail of it the next time I saw her. "William," she said, "is altered, he is no longer a youth; and, though only one and twenty, looks quite a staid man—older than I do," glancing into the small mirror opposite her, "and so melancholy. Poor fellow! but you know, my dear Madame Taffetas, he should not have made such an avowal—that," she said colouring, "he has loved me for years. How wrong! and poor dear M. de Laurinoy alive then." "But," I interposed in extenuation—for the romance of the thing interested me—"he never revealed his love till M. le Marquis was no more." "That is no matter," said Rosine; "in justice to my husband's memory—in justice to myself, I have desired never to see him again. Besides, would you believe, he sent those bank-notes—I found that out. Well, he is now gone for ever: let us forget him."

Notwithstanding this resolution, Madame de Laurinoy subsequently informed me that William, though so young, had thrown himself into public

life, in which there was much scope at that time. After that, she heard that he intended to forsake the arena of politics, and was bent on going to India. "Whither, or to what part of the East," she said, "I know not, nor do I wish to know."

I had secretly my own suspicions that Madame de Laurinoy was not quite so insensible as she appeared, and that the young man had created more impression on her heart than the youth of fourteen.

She was one day in my presence reading a newspaper, and turning suddenly very pale, fainted. After I had brought her to, I just glanced over the paper. There I read, that "Mr. William Gervais, son of Her Grace the Duchess of Garstone, had sailed in the "Bunder Bey," for Calcutta. Some high appointment had been bestowed on him, for which, the newspaper said, his correct judgment and ardent zeal well qualified him.

Madame de Laurinoy continued to work not only for our house, but others. She saved a little competence, not suddenly, but by dint of much self-denial, great care, and prudence; and though she might have had numerous lovers, she declined all advances of the kind.

When she had reached her thirty-fifth year, I think I never beheld a more truly beautiful woman, looking younger by six or seven years

than her actual age. She was generally cheerful; though she gave you the impression that she suffered from some secret sorrow—and she did. The devotion of William Gervais, his self-expatriation, all worked on her feelings; and the deaths of the Duke and Duchess of Garstone, which took place some years after William had left England, did not abate her interest in his welfare.

The Duke, whose title died with him, left his whole fortune to his step-son. And when His Excellency Judge Gervais re-visited his native land once more, with a forlorn hope of laying his wealth at the feet of her he had loved from infancy to manhood, he found, to his great joy and astonishment, love as fervent and irrepressible as his own. His maturer years were crowned by the affection of the idol of his youth.

Madame de Laurinoy, I remember, embroidered her own wedding dress: it was her peculiar whim; and as she entered the church I overheard a looker-on lament that the bridegroom was so much older than the bride; a hot climate, and anxiety of mind, having aged that colonial dignitary so much, that no one for an instant suspected him of being the younger of the bridal pair.

A Passage in the Life of a Princess.

I HAVE, in my occupation about great people, seen too much of rank and fashion ever to have dreamt of coveting one or the other. The higher the degree, the greater, in my opinion, are the sacrifices demanded by the world—sacrifices which tear the very heart-strings of the victim. I allude particularly to my own sex, for individuals of the other fight hard against Circumstance, and bend, but seldom break, in the blast of the storm. Royal personages especially seem to come into the world to have the prompting of natural affection smothered as soon as it has birth; and those who witness with delight the splendid pageants ensuing on the occasion of Royal betrothals and marriages little dream of the heart aching beneath its robe of golden tissue, of the brow damp with anguish and dread beneath its diamond coronal.

I have never forgotten the impression I received when an accident caused me to be placed near the person of Her Royal Highness the Princess ———. The occasion was this. Some splendid

diamonds had been presented to this illustrious lady as a complimentary offering by a great company, anxious for some public scheme depending on Court patronage. Some of the gems, though small, were of exceeding brilliancy, and the Princess wished them to be inserted in a very beautiful trimming, which the Royal lady had tastefully designed herself, and which required a skilful hand to execute in all its details, and a person, moreover, whose character would vouch that she was not likely to secrete any of the valuable gems. I was the person selected for this task, an onerous one in every sense of the word, but which I did not dare decline for fear of our house losing the custom of the Court. It was a great honour, as Christiana Marcourt said; but, nevertheless, I may now confess it was one I did not particularly covet, though I saw and heard strange things enough during my short sojourn at Court to have satisfied the most romantic and curious person in the world, and maybe the reader of this will say I have my own share of those weaknesses. I was in the apartments of the Princess all day, and slept at the Palace in a chamber prepared for me.

I may just mention that it was at this period I was able to introduce at Court a musical instrument, which has played an important part in the world of commerce. In so doing I was happy to serve old friends and very worthy persons. I

allude to Messrs. Sebastian and Jean Baptiste Erard—persons who had establishments both in Paris and London. You may be very thriving in business, and yet need an introduction to great people; therefore, when one day my good friend Jean Baptiste Erard called on me, telling me he had invented a wonderful instrument which his brother was engaged in perfecting, and that he begged of me the favour to name the invention to the Queen or some of the Royal family, I was very well pleased, having in my mind the remembrance of many civilities and much real kindness shown to me by the family when I visited Paris, to promise I would take the first opportunity of mentioning it as he wished.

This invention, an improvement on the old harpsichord, was denominated a Grand Pianoforte; its shape, something like its predecessor, carried with it importance as well as elegance, and in short it possessed every quality which the united genius and invention of the brothers could combine. The price was, however, extravagant—and it is well known that in my day our Court was economical in its private expenses. I took advantage of being employed about the Queen Consort's Royal person, and the first grand pianoforte of the Erards was purchased by the King for the birth-day present to one of his daughters; that daughter was the illustrious young lady whose diamonds I was embroidering into a

gorgeous trimming for an occasion of which I was then ignorant.

The model of the pianoforte, I may here state, had just placed its maker in the ranks of the French Legion of Honour. Here in England, if we do not reward with honours, we do with hard cash, which, in some cases, is much better. The Royal young lady had the satisfaction of possessing an instrument different from any other, for I know not why, but pianofortes similar were not generally constructed by the firm till some ten or fifteen years after. It was a beautiful-looking instrument. Polished on its dark mahogany surface to the highest degree of which wood was susceptible, having crimson silk fittings, with gold ornaments on every leg, and innumerable drawers beneath its frame, the piano was examined rapturously by the distinguished lady to whom, owing to her excessive love for, and skill in, music, it was deemed the most fitting gift by her Royal parent.

On every occasion of Her Royal Highness's leisure, the most exquisite melodies were elicited from its keys, the Princess reserving to herself the sole privilege of touching them, keeping the instrument in her own private apartments, and locking it with a silver key.

During my employment in this Princess's apartments, I became much attached to the Royal young lady; and being a witness perforce of her

private existence—for she superintended the work herself—many and many a curious phase in the life of a Princess have I observed.

I, Hester Taffetas, have seen this young lady, who was hemmed in with Royal trammels and etiquettes, the fatigues and restraints of which can scarcely by humbler individuals be conceived, ready to sink with indisposition, yet compelled to be enrobed in state apparel, and to stand for hours behind the chair of Her Royal Highness's august mother—who, accustomed to the formalities of a petty German Court, always preserved the strictest etiquette. I have beheld the Princess in her eagerness to free herself from her cumbersome state trappings, feathers, and finery, fling them off without waiting for the assistance of her attendants, and then sink down on her couch, fevered with exertion and long endurance. I certainly never sighed for Royal dignity after being once admitted behind the scenes, and I am sure the illustrious victim at such moments envied me my humble privacy. She has indeed more than once said so; for she was a frank-hearted, affable young lady.

When left alone with her, I frequently saw tears in her eyes; and once when she had retired to her own room, of which she had left the door half open, I beheld her, from my work-table, unlock a casket, and taking forth a packet of letters, read them one after the

other, pressing them often to her lips. I saw the same process repeated, too, with a lock of dark hair.

She was very handsome, and I thought, and thought truly, could hardly have loved in vain, for her heart was as kind as her face was fair. In her absence, her women would talk freely before me. I heard in this way whispers of a Royal marriage, and of the Princess's extreme repugnance—nay, utter aversion. Again I heard of parental anger towards a more favoured lover; of a Royal marriage act, which desolated the hearts, and sometimes maddened the brain, of those whom it affected. There was mystery, chidings, weepings—then resignation, and heart-broken compliance. I shall never forget the evening before her marriage, when the unhappy young lady played on her piano for the last time. I had been kept there to assist in the preparations, and was to remain over the morrow. It was nearly twilight, and I was putting away my work in a large closet in the apartment. Dressed splendidly for some grand reception, Her Royal Highness was passing the time which intervened in her favourite occupation. In a few days the grand piano was to be despatched as a present from Her Royal Highness to the daughter of a noble Scotch Earl, who for some political reason or other was to be propitiated by Royal flattery. The Princess was playing a plaintive air, and, fortunately

as it proved after, thought I had quitted the apartment, when her favourite woman opened the door. The young lady scarcely turned her head until she was made aware that some one had entered the room; and hastened to her side. For my own part, I was too much terrified to stir, and when at last I did gain self-possession, I dared not for the life of me betray myself; so there I was obliged to remain, a most unwilling listener, frightened to death lest I should be discovered, and one way or another get into trouble. The Princess rose from the piano in embarrassed terror; you could see it marked in her ashy face. "Oh, who has done this?" she exclaimed, wringing her hands; "is it not utter madness? Do you wish to ruin us both irretrievably?"

"Let them take me," said the intruder, rising, and folding his arms proudly—"let them take me. Here I could die contented, could I but know——"

"Oh, cruel!" was the rejoinder. "My heart will break soon enough; there needed not this." She was sobbing with her grief, not loud, but with a kind of subdued, smothered sound that smote on the heart.

"Do you blame me, then, for a wish to see you before you are lost to me for ever? Have you then learned already to forget me?"

She made no reply, but sat down, or rather threw herself on a seat—a picture of helpless and

forlorn love. At length her pale lips moved, and she said something faintly about "duty."

"Duty!" said the visitant; "duty! There is none then due to me—there can be no perjury from Royal lips! If so——"

He was interrupted by the bed-chamber woman, who all this time had been keeping watch outside the door, abandoning her post, and running just in time to catch the Royal lady, who fell on the floor in a dead swoon. Then indeed the impetuous lover—for lover he was—repented, and kissing her brow and lips, besought her to bless him with one word. She came to herself presently, and requested the woman would leave the apartment for a few moments. She was of course obeyed; and I, concealed, and not daring to move, was the sole witness of that bitter parting between two loving and stricken hearts, separated as effectually as if the tomb had already enshrouded one, which, indeed, not many years after it did.

The bed-chamber woman at length conducted him away; and then came the abandonment of the bereaved lady to her despair and agony. Her women were two hours that evening making their Royal mistress fit to be seen, and repairing the ravages which the contending passions of the last half hour had left on the Princess's sweet face.

The Royal wedding took place next day; and a few weeks after the pianoforte was despatched as a present from her friend the Princess ———

to Lady Bella Rosendale, daughter and heiress to the Earl of Glenfine. It was received with demonstrations of gratitude and pleasure, and was duly installed in the drawing-room of Rosendale Castle, in the county of ——.

I have another story connected with the Princess's piano; and, with my kind reader's leave, I will tell it, if little Mary is not tired of writing.

The Earl's Daughter.

I FEEL anxious to relate the history of the Lady Isabella Rosendale, because I think it curious that she and her playmate the Princess ———, an episode of whose life I have just related, should have been so ill-fated in affairs of love.

Lady Isabella—or Bella, as she was mostly termed—was a charming young lady, and her father's only child and heiress. The Earl of Glenfine was very proud and fond of her; yet, petted as she was, Lady Bella durst never contravene any of her noble parent's wishes, which once declared were to be observed as law; nor, indeed, oppose herself to any of his views and opinions, some of which were extremely prejudiced and narrow-minded. This influence of Lord Glenfine over his daughter, though it did not extend to her private opinions, yet coloured her outward manners. She was timid and yielding to a fault, seldom venturing, in her father's presence, to express her thoughts, or form conclusions on any subject.

I think it was a great error in the educational

systems of my day, that ideas of duty were effectually separated from those of affection, which was too often not accorded at all by children to parents, from whose confidence they were kept at an unnatural distance, and whose cold manners froze all filial love.

This was pretty nearly the case with Lady Bella; she had a warm and tender heart, inclined to make much of everything that would permit her to cherish it; and, even in spite of his formality and stern deportment, loved her father, as much as it was possible for any human being to love him. His daughter's shrinking timidity suited the Earl's temper well; for this nobleman disliked anything in the shape of intellect in women, and deemed high and noble feelings unsuitable to the sex. Apparently, therefore, Lady Bella Rosendale was a beautiful automaton,—to be wondered at and admired, much as if she had been a lovely specimen of art, kept under a glass case—as useless, of as little real value in filling a true page in the great Book of Life, as such an artificial image would have been.

Lord Glenfine was ambitious—ambitious for himself, ambitious for his daughter. I, who once heard her impassioned expression, when playing Mozart's airs, and singing Handel's songs—that apostle of music—knew instinctively, that there was a latent fire slumbering in her soul, which was smothered beneath her conventional and

formal existence; but her father deemed her exactly fitted for the hollow life of Courts, and conceived that she would amply fulfil her destiny, by aggrandizing him, in making a great marriage. As she possessed beauty, rank, and fortune, he considered this but a natural consequence, and carefully excluded all society likely to frustrate his wishes. For such had Bella Rosendale been educated, for such her future existence was by her parent destined.

At seventeen Lady Bella assumed the command of her father's household. A remote cousin, Miss Griselda Cameron, afforded the motherless girl all that was permitted her of female friendship and sympathy. Bella had never enjoyed a mother's love; Lady Glenfine having expired a few hours after the birth of the infant. Miss Griselda, who, on the occasion of that event, had been summoned from the Old-town of Edinburgh, was ill-calculated to supply the maternal place. She was, even then, repulsive and frigid, qualities which age had by no means softened in her. She seldom spoke, and when she did her conversation was anything but genial or interesting. She imparted the mysteries of knitting, knotting, and carpet-work to her young and noble relative; and no doubt was duly qualified to school her in the requisite lore of pickling and preserving, cleaning silk gowns, and making gooseberry and cowslip wines. Miss Griselda, however,

was satisfied that she was performing towards her charge every possible duty. As for the cultivation of the heart or the intellect, this lady knew little of such things.

Thus in these "good old days" did women fritter their lives away; believing not in the possibility of sins of omission; fenced in with a thousand nameless proprieties; and effectually prevented thereby from the exercise and dissemination of social progress, if even from a false and lofty eminence of their own creating they ever contemplated it.

* * * * * *

In the year 1795, a young *emigré* of illustrious descent, having with difficulty, four years previously, made his escape from France, arrived from America, where he had been exiled; vainly attempting to subsist on such scanty relics of his fortune as he could save when he left France. I never, indeed, precisely understood why he preferred coming to England: I believe it was because the climate of America did not agree with him; or otherwise, one might have thought his ruined fortunes would have been more easily repaired in that young and flourishing country, rather than in England. The Count St. Amaire, however, could do little else than teach his mother-tongue, play on the violin and harpsichord, make ingenious wooden toys and such like trifles; and

he probably felt that if compelled to earn his bread these resources might be more available in the old, luxurious mother country, than in the stern, new, and vigorous one. Perhaps, too, he might indulge a hope that the Earl of Glenfine, an old associate at the French Court, might procure him some appointment under the British government, whereby he might exist. He brought to Rosendale Castle letters, credentials, and warm recommendations as a gentleman of integrity and talents. He was hospitably received, and his sojourn at the castle earnestly requested, for my Lord Glenfine was a proud man, and would not have had it said that he requited the deceased Count St. Amaire's friendship by refusing countenance, in a limited way, to his son. So the young *emigré* took up his quarters at Rosendale, and sorely I have heard he was put to it, to disburse the charges which vails inflicted on the guests of that time.

About this period my Lord Glenfine was deeply occupied in certain projects of his own. He earnestly desired that his daughter should be attached to the Queen's household; a hope which the presentation of so splendid a gift as the grand piano strongly fostered in his heart,—I beg his Lordship's pardon—his mind, I mean,—and, for aught else but the realization of these projects, he had neither eyes, ears, nor understanding. It subsequently appeared that Miss Griselda was

equally oblivious, but of the last, indeed, I always had my suspicions.

Henri St. Amaire and Bella Rosendale were constantly in each other's society, riding, walking, talking together. If there be a school of love, these young, fresh hearts needed no teachers, no catechism. Learning was spontaneous, and the lesson fixed at once and for ever, ere a sense of the blame likely to accrue to their love came across their minds. Should not Henri have reflected that in stealing the affections of his noble entertainer's daughter, poor as he was in all that constitutes the happiness of the World, he was committing a great wrong? He did not think so. He had been elated by his restoration to fitting society, and in that elation had totally forgotten that he was no longer a suitable match in his fortunes for the heiress of an English Earl. But St. Amaire still dwelt on the fact that his fathers had been Peers of France; and though France had no longer any peers, he still thought his honourable birth an equivalent for English rank and wealth.

When Lady Bella reflected on the matter, knowing, as she did full well, that she, a poor, weak girl, was expected to bear on her fragile shoulders the full weight of the family tree,—did she perceive that she might almost as well have loved one of her father's menials, and have calculated on his consent to the match? No; she in

her heart, knowing much better, strove to believe that St. Amaire's noble descent would compensate in the eyes of that stern father for his present reduced position, for, in spite of the commiseration shown for the noble *emigrés* who flocked to England during the years when France was a scene of anarchy, yet there was little done to ameliorate their condition. Most of them earned a scanty living as teachers of music, dancing, fencing, or overstocked the shops with ingenious toys; and however distinguished the exile's former rank and circumstances, he soon experienced the neglect and want of consideration which too often accrue to poverty and adverse fortune.

But the infatuated lovers, with affection irresistible in the commencement, and equally impossible afterwards to be extinguished, imprudently enjoyed the happiness of the present hour without heeding what consequences the future might produce. If that grand pianoforte, the Princess's gift, could have spoken, how many tender interviews it might have detailed! Lady Bella, playing soft airs, and Henri St. Amaire bending tenderly over her; indeed, but for that costly instrument, the lovers could scarcely have carried on much converse. Music was their constant resource and pretext, when Miss Griselda Cameron sat over an immense piece of embroidery, sharp as a ferret, watchful as a mastiff; while the young couple, with the usual infatuation of lovers,

believing every one blind but themselves, fondly fancied the quiet lady too busy sorting her shades of silk to notice their conduct.

Three—four months passed thus; when Lord Glenfine announced to his guest his intention to reside for a space in his town house in Bird-cage Walk, requesting at the same time the pleasure of the Count's company there. To his daughter, on the same evening, he conveyed privately an intimation that she must accept the addresses of the Duke of ———, a nobleman high in office, and unexceptionable in character, wealth, and descent.

It was then that Lord Glenfine's daughter, casting from her with a wonderful effort her timidity and hesitation, informed his Lordship very decidedly, that she could do nothing of the kind—a declaration which caused her astonished parent first to doubt his own sense of hearing, and next to turn white with anger and dismay. He demanded, in the first place, to know the reason of Lady Bella's determination, owning that hitherto he had entertained the highest opinion of his daughter's duty and obedience, an opinion he said, not even to be shaken by her present extraordinary conduct in declining the hand of a nobleman, of whose merit the very fact of his being the choice of himself, the Earl of Glenfine, should be sufficient proof. Still his daughter, with a blanched cheek and lips tightly

compressed, reiterated her wish to remain single, and still her proud and imperative father was far from suspecting the real source of her obstinacy, for thus he termed her resolve.

The interview terminated at length in stern displeasure on one side, and a resisting determination on the other. In this state of affairs the family removed to the metropolis, the Count St. Amaire travelling with Lord Glenfine in one carriage, and Lady Bella and Miss Griselda and suite in another. Henri, who knew nothing of the purport of his noble host's journey, felicitated himself on being at length enabled to pay a part of his obligations to the Earl, that nobleman having thrown out hints of his need of a private secretary—"a confidential person," was added by his lordship significantly. St. Amaire had eagerly proffered his services, which were graciously accepted, and hopes were held out to the young Count that his patron would shortly procure him some appointment under government. And so, hoping, scheming, fearing, the travellers reached London. The grand piano, too, was conveyed to the town house.

When the family became settled, Lord Glenfine renewed his commands to his daughter, but not all his anger and denunciations could avail anything with that young lady, who, if she retired from these stormy interviews in tears, and almost broken-hearted, never wavered once in her resolution.

She had contrived to make St. Amaire aware of her position, and the pianoforte was the chosen receptacle for the most ardent epistles from the young French Count, and the most delicate demonstrations of attachment from the young lady. But the impending thunder-storm was over their devoted heads—not, alas, to be succeeded by a clearer atmosphere. Lord Glenfine—exasperated by his daughter's steady perversity, as he chose to designate her firmness—consulted with Miss Griselda Cameron, and gave that observant lady an opportunity she had long been wishing for. Hesitatingly, and with a premise that she might be wrong in her opinion, she informed the Earl of her suspicions that an attachment existed between St. Amaire and Lady Bella. There was no temporizing with the matter. The lovers were summoned to the library, and there, before Miss Cameron, Lord Glenfine accused his new secretary of a design to steal his heiress, and his daughter of an attachment to one whom he pleased to term a homeless beggar. Taken by surprise, the young Count was some minutes ere he could reply to Lord Glenfine's gross and unmeasured attack, when Lady Bella rose from the chair into which she had sunk on hearing the first words of her father's fierce outburst, and boldly confronted the tempest.

"I *do* love the Count, father," she said, her delicate frame quivering beneath the enforced

effort of her mind; "I will no longer hesitate to avow it, here, before him, in your presence, and in my cousin's hearing. 'Tis true, I am an heiress, he the sport of a cruel fortune; but for that accident, even you must admit, he is fully my equal."

"An heiress!" the old man exclaimed; "you will soon cease to have that distinction if you persist in this disobedience. It is in my power to render you as much a beggar as the man you have chosen."

"Then a beggar, my Lord, I must become; my plighted faith is the Count St. Amaire's, and never, unless he so wills it, may I recall it." She would have sunk to the ground as she spoke, so violent was the effort she made, if Henri had not caught her in his arms, tenderly re-assuring her.

Count St. Amaire addressed the Earl in a firm and manly tone, urging his birth, his illustrious name, his energy, and the hope he cherished of being one day able to support Lady Bella Rosendale as befitted her station. Lord Glenfine was excited with rage.

"Count St. Amaire," he said, "take if you will that girl, who has had cunning enough to circumvent her trusting father's plans; wed her if you like, wed her, I say, with her father's bitterest wrath upon her head. Then see what a wife she will make, reared up, as she has been, in the lap of luxury itself."

She still clung to Henri, trembling in every limb, but her true heart unwavering and unshaken. She turned her head, and steadfastly regarded her father, standing before her pale with passion, the words of unfatherly anger scarcely escaped from his lips. "My mother," she said, "loved *you*, Sir, in opposition to her family, yet you scrupled not to prevail on her to keep her faith. If I have failed in filial duty by loving M. St. Amaire, it was, alas! an involuntary crime, and my love can now never be renounced save by his unworthiness. You can, in one moment, cancel the recollection of years of duty and affectionate submission on my part, and heap terrible invectives on my head,—the head of your own child. What love, then, have you for me?—I am regarded only as the toy of your leisure, the instrument of your ambition. Henri," she said, turning to him, "take me; I will not be a burthen, I will be a true help-mate, soothing your afflictions and lessening your cares. We shall be poor, it is true; but loving—we shall be all in all to each other."

She was now overcome by the strength of contending passions; the wreck of filial attachment, the confidence she placed in St. Amaire struggling with her native hesitation, and some secret fear that she might be guilty of sin in thus asserting her love. The Count, supporting her in his arms, strove to alter the Earl's determination. All

question of wealth, he said, should be set aside if Lord Glenfine but gave his consent; it was the woman he worshipped, not her gold or station. Lord Glenfine had promised him an official appointment, and on that they would contrive to live.

His Lordship, whose anger by this time had concentrated itself in coldness and contempt, with ironical politeness assured M. St. Amaire that he would never bestow anything but hate on the man who had robbed him of his only daughter, adding some allusions to serpents and vipers, which fairly roused the young man's blood. Patient hitherto only for the sake of her he loved, he now threw off all restraint, and braved the exasperated Peer. Placing his arms round the fainting girl, he assured Lord Glenfine that his care and tenderness as a husband should shame that nobleman in the character of a father. The Earl answered by ringing the bell violently, and a servant was desired to fetch a coach. "For I conclude," said the Earl, politely bowing, "that you and your delicate bride do not—at present, at least—wish to walk through the streets. The young lady's wardrobe and personal property shall be sent after her on receiving your address; and if I might presume to offer advice, your immediate union would be expedient, as I am not desirous that infamy should be added to the slur of deceit and disobedience already attached to a female of my family."

With these cruel words—the last Lady Bella ever heard from her father's lips—the Earl of Glenfine quitted the apartment, Miss Cameron following him without a word of sympathy or kindness to the forlorn young couple, who, when the coach came, took their departure from that loveless roof, outcasts on the wide world, with nothing to trust to save their own loving hearts.

They were driven to an hotel, and Henri placing his beloved under the protection of the landlady, went forth and procured himself a lodging for that night. The next morning they were married by license, to obtain which, and pay the requisite fees, the bridegroom had to part with some long-treasured relics of his past affluence. The landlady of the hotel officiated as bridesmaid and witness, and the clerk gave the bride away. Thus they were married.

They removed from the hotel, which was expensive, and took plain lodgings near the Haymarket. To that humble residence, Lady Bella's clothes, a few jewels, and the grand piano, were sent by Lord Glenfine's command. The young girl rapturously embraced her husband when the instrument arrived. "Now," said she, "my dearest love, here is our bread. I feared my father would have kept this dear instrument as an heir-loom. I can teach music, dearest, and——" He stopped her with a sad kiss, for already poverty had shown its grim visage within their doors.

Afterwards Madame St. Amaire advertised to give lessons in music and singing—and a few pupils came, but they soon left, and no more replaced them. The grand piano stood in the shabbily furnished apartment, a splendid relic of past glories—glories the very memory of which were fast fading away from the usages and habits of the young couple, who, embarrassed as they were even from their wedding day, became even more so when, eleven months after, a little girl was added to their joys and cares.

St. Amaire used to walk about London, giving lessons in French at a very low rate. He had the tuition of a boys' school somewhere near Kingsland —a rural suburb then—where, when he arrived faint and weary after a scanty breakfast, and a long walk, the boys would try his temper and his patience sorely. His refinement and sensibility were sadly put to it. But the small profits arising out of this occupation were insufficient to support the little household; and when the baby was a year old, Madame St. Amaire one day, pointing to her piano, told her husband sorrowfully that its sale would afford a year's income at least. He was aghast at the idea. "What!" said he, "sell the Princess's piano? I would rather walk barefoot." But when his wife, pointing to her own feet, told him that very soon she would be obliged to walk barefooted also, he began to hesitate.

Lord Glenfine had never relented; he was

now high in office, and Miss Griselda Cameron having by the death of a distant Indian cousin come into a large property, partly out of revenge, and partly from interest, my lord married her, and sorely they say she caused him to repent that step. However, the new Lady Glenfine, though neither young nor handsome, lorded it pretty well over everybody She took especial care that no communication from his daughter should reach the Earl.

So the piano at last, after many tears, and with unavailing regrets, was advertised, and many persons came to look at it, for such an instrument was a rare curiosity at that time. One hundred and fifty guineas was the price demanded, yet few persons seemed willing to purchase it. At length a gaudy equipage drew up before the door of St. Amaire's lodgings, and out of it stepped an overdressed elderly lady, and two younger ones even more tawdrily attired. They came to view the piano.

It was criticized, commented on, and finally the eldest daughter volunteered to "try" it, which process she effected by thumping on it a sonata of Haydyn's, very much out of time.

"Well, Fanny, what do you think?" said the dowager, after her daughter's exhibition was concluded.

"Well, ma," said Fanny, who appeared to be a woman of business, "I should say a hundred and

twenty is quite enough; but as Madame St. Amaire tells us it belonged to a Princess, on that account it may be worth that, though otherwise I should think a hundred pounds plenty for it."

Madame St. Amaire, with tears in her eyes pointing out to the bargain-hunters the perfections of her instrument, its handsome proportions and costly ornaments, the elder lady desired her daughter to desist from haggling. "Your pa," she observed, "could afford that sum, if he liked ten times over;" and thereupon, taking out her note case, she counted out the sum demanded. Madame St. Amaire took it, with a trembling hand and suppressed sighs. The piano was to be sent the lady said, to Ludgate Hill. And the trio took their departure.

That evening, Madame St. Amaire played her last air on the Princess's gift. Jewels, books everything precious had gone long ago, and now the poor lady had to endure the sad pang of parting with a relic that had witnessed the progress of her early and unhappy love; and which, with its harmony, had soothed sickness and sorrow. But her eye had, some months before, detected that he for whom she had sacrificed family, friends and fortune, was sinking beneath a cruel disease which spares none on whom its seal is once set. Henri St. Amaire, although he knew it not, was daily fading away from consumption. And the piano went. Could it have spoken, what

lamentations it might have uttered, passing from a palace to the house of a trader!

In another twelvemonth, Madame St. Amaire lost the husband for whose beloved sake she had relinquished all. She barely had enough left from the proceeds of her piano's sale, and her own industry in embroidering, to pay for his funeral. She applied to her father; and while awaiting an answer, learned that he had died soon after her application, having totally disinherited her, leaving the bulk of his fortune to his Countess, who, in her turn, bequeathed it to some Scotch cousin. Not even the smallest legacy was left to his daughter or her child.

The young widow was received into the house of a distant connexion, a wealthy lady, who patronized her in public, and tormented her in private. At the age of twenty-eight, helpless and worn out, Madame St. Amaire departed from a life which in its dawn gave such happy prospects.

Her daughter subsequently married a gentleman who held a small curacy in an obscure village of Hampshire. As I have often heard Dr. Barnacle, our minister, say, when discoursing about our love for the things of this life—"Sic transit gloria mundi."

* * * * * *

I will not venture to imply any further moral from this story, lest I should by some readers be

accused of setting forth filial disobedience as an example to young persons; but this I will say that I think our duties are reciprocal, and that if children owe their parents respect, love, and obedience, parents should equally exercise forbearance consideration, and mercy.

The Lily-Mere.

"Talk about knowing secrets and seeing the world!" I am quoting the words of an old friend of mine, Mrs. Mildew, who like myself, left early a widow, went into service as housekeeper, and had a deal of experience in high families. She was an arrant gossip, though: my readers by this time, I dare say, deem me not much better; and I must say, Christiana Marcourt and myself used to love dearly to get Mrs. Mildew over a snug dish of tea, after work was finished for the day, to tell us some of her curious reminiscences, for she had witnessed and heard many strange things in her time. She used to visit us whenever she was out of place or had a holiday, and liked much to see, from some snug corner, the Drawing Rooms and Levées, of which we, being employed at Court, had interest enough to get her a sight. "Talk," quoth she, one evening—"talk about secrets, I should like to know who hears so many, and sees such strange sights. We cannot help seeing much of the private

troubles and secret affairs of our employers, and many distressing and curious scenes we are compelled to witness. We are well acquainted with the pretences and odd humours of great folks, and often sigh over their hidden sorrows, and laugh at their foolish weaknesses and paltry shams. When the Duchess of Glitterpin goes to Court apparently radiant in the Glitterpin family diamonds, who but Mrs. Tasty, her woman, knows that the real gems are reposing safely under lock and key at Mr. Lombard's the eminent pawnbroker, shut out from the respect and homage which the French paste counterfeits obtain from the world. When the honourable Mr. Luddrell dines at his club off venison cutlets and Chateau Margoux, who but that gentleman's own man would ever suspect that the honourable gentleman that very morning had contemplated suicide, from which determination he was only diverted by Lazarus Moss advancing a heavy post-obit bill, and thereby enabling Mr. Luddrell to pacify the most urgent of his creditors?

Who knows half so well as the cook at Lord Grill's how difficult a matter it is to provide cabinet dinners, when the poulterer, the fishmonger, and the butcher, are pressing about their long-standing accounts? And Wilson the groom knows it was his master, Sir Salvage Selbody, who was examined privately before police magistrate Mr. Beale, for assaulting and threatening Lady

Selbody, who has lived ever so many years on a separate allowance from Sir Salvage, who got into the papers after all, and had his case headed "Assault by a 'gentleman!'" These are some of the things servants get a knowledge of, while the out of door world bow and scrape, and envy great people. I would rather be a little nobody, ten times over. Just give me another cup of tea, Mistress Taffetas, and I'll tell you of a terrible affair that happened in one of the rich people's houses where I have served.

About the year 1770, I went to live as housekeeper in the family of Mr. Merriland, of Commontree Park, ——shire. This gentleman had not always held a large landed property, but had obtained the estate by his marriage with a very proud lady, Miss Iskdale—who, in spite of good birth, splendid fortune, and a fair share of personal beauty, had remained unmarried till she had arrived at the age of forty. Mr. Merriland, whose original name of Osborne was resigned on his taking possession of certain lands at the time of his union with Miss Iskdale, was I believe a barrister, and went to Commontree Park about some law business, the lady being threatened with serious loss. Mr. Merriland being very clever, gained the suit, and afterwards Miss Iskdale contrived to let her preference for the young lawyer be understood by him; and though he was

unwilling at first to perceive it, being likely to rise in his profession, and moreover ten years her junior, yet eventually the persuasions of mutual friends overcame his aversion, and he married her. I believe it was her pride and haughtiness that formed the chief obstacle to their union, for Mrs. Merriland at that time did not look her age, and she was what is called a clever woman—though her sarcasm was often, in spite of its wit, intolerable, and there was a want of repose about her by no means pleasant to a gentleman of domestic tastes and habits. However, they were married, and her settlements in favour of Mr. Merriland were liberal, and rendered him independent.

They had been married a long time when I went to live with them. The eldest daughter, Miss Sarah, was fifteen, and her sister Marion two years younger. These young ladies were so advanced in learning, having received the tuition of a neighbouring clergyman, that they were in need only of a finishing governess to perfect them in languages and accomplishments, which Mrs. Merriland desired her daughters should possess before they were introduced into society. Accordingly, they had applied to some London gentry to recommend a governess and a housekeeper. I answered the latter—in the other, they were on my arrival as yet unsuited. When I had been, however, at the Park about a month, a lady, whose talents and recommendations appeared likely to

suit, applied for the situation. She was, it appeared, a young English orphan who had been brought up in a family abroad, and who, having received a thoroughly complete education, was now ready to impart her knowledge to others for a livelihood. Her name was Miss Englebridge, and she was required to teach the young ladies French, German, Italian, drawing, and music. She had the best of recommendations as to character and abilities; and I was desired at length, after much deliberation, to prepare for her reception in the family. I shall not easily forget the night of her arrival at Commontree Park; it blew a perfect hurricane of wind and rain, and the carriage which Mrs. Merriland had ordered to be sent for the stranger's conveyance from the town through which the coach from London passed, came back injured by a collision in the dark with a wagon,—a circumstance which put my mistress out considerably, she being accustomed to fret herself about small misfortunes.

Mrs. Merriland sent word to me by one of the young ladies, that I was to receive Miss Englebridge, and conduct her to her own room. I must say, the thought struck me that the mistress of the mansion might have condescended, without greatly losing her dignity, to receive the young creature just come from so long a journey; but, however, I of course knew my duty too well to offer any hint, and therefore silently went to do as I was bid.

I went, then, into the hall, and there found the young lady standing pale and shivering, amidst her luggage, which the servants had thrown down. She struck me, at first sight, as being a good deal more juvenile in appearance than any of us expected to see. She looked about nineteen, which, I believe, was her real age. Wrapped up as she was, fatigued with travelling, and I doubt not suffering from cold and hunger, she appeared even then one of the sweetest creatures I had ever looked on. I declare I had not the heart to ask her to go up into a solitary bedroom; but I saw at a glance that she was a real gentlewoman, and, in spite of her being quite a child compared to myself, I almost feared to offend her when I asked if she would mind coming into the housekeeper's room, where there was a cheerful blazing fire, and where I was about to take my own tea. She gave me such a thankful look when I asked her, as much as to say, "I want a friend so badly that I am glad to make one even of a servant." So I conducted her to my own snug room, where I believe, as Mr. Sidds the butler used to say, there was more of real comfort than was to be found in the more splendid and luxurious apartments of the mansion; and there I was happy to see a little colour come into her pale cheek.

After partaking of some cold chicken, and a cup of my best gunpowder tea, she seemed quite

a different being; and when the meal was concluded, I took her to her own room, and giving her a hint to change her dress, for Mrs. Merriland could not bear to see any one shabbily or meanly attired, I left her to herself. I was glad afterwards that I did so, for my mistress presently sent word that as there was no company, Miss Englebridge was to go down to the drawing-room, and introduce herself to the young ladies. I went, therefore, to her room—though properly speaking it was none of my duty—and fetched her, showing her the way through the winding staircases and galleries of the house, among which a stranger might have got bewildered and lost. When we reached the drawing-room door, I took the liberty of whispering to her not to mind my mistress's high manner, but to be a little high herself, for I saw she was just that gentle kind of creature who would soon be crushed by a haughty woman like Mrs. Merriland.

I believe that first interview was not very satisfactory. My mistress expected to see a commanding lady of about five-and-twenty or thirty; for, somehow, in the arrangements, age had not been mentioned. Mrs. Merriland expressed her dissatisfaction at the extreme youth of Miss Englebridge. However, the next day, when the young ladies commenced their studies, they found that their governess was quite as competent to convey knowledge as many double her age. She

played finely on both harp and harpsichord, and possessed a richly cultivated voice; her drawings were, I believe, quite remarkable, and her fluency in foreign languages undeniable, for some gentleman who was a great linguist, being in the neighbourhood on a visit to one of the gentry, was invited to the hall to test her knowledge, and he said she spoke, as well as read and wrote them, to perfection. So Mrs. Merriland, though with a very ill-grace, determined to keep her governess; but for all that, my mistress apparently, in spite of Miss Englebridge's surpassing talents, never appeared to like the girl; and Miss Marion and Miss Sarah (who took sadly after their mamma for pride and ill-humour) led her a harassing life. They were both fine-grown, handsome girls, looking much older than they really were; and they soon enough gave the governess to understand that they would only learn as they pleased, and when they pleased.

But in proportion to the dislike and contempt with which she was treated by the ladies of the family, was the interest—a most unusual one—which Mr. Merriland seemed to take in her. He unreservedly expressed his admiration of her graceful style of beauty, and pointed out her elegant simplicity of manner as a pattern for his own daughters. Mr. Merriland was a reserved gentleman enough in general, mostly shut up in his own study, intent on his books,

and leaving the management of affairs very much in the hands of his lady; but very soon he and his haughty wife had words, especially when he expressed his utter disapprobation of the style in which the governess was treated. She was, indeed, poor dear! regarded by Mrs. Merriland rather as a hired machine, devoid of ideas or feelings, than a sentient human being. She was ordered to appear if there was company, and requested to play till her fingers ached, or to sing till she was wearied, and then was expected to remain silent and unnoticed, for of course the company usually imitated the behaviour of the mistress of the house. It was not always so, however, for Mr. Spencer the curate, who was a young gentleman of good family, and of a lofty chivalrous kind of spirit, which made him at once respected and feared, became much impressed with the qualities of Miss Englebridge. He took every opportunity of conversing with her, and became fascinated when he found what a rare combination of gentleness and strong intellect her character presented.

We knew afterwards that he took an earnest resolution to win her for his wife; and having a deep regard and extraordinary friendship for Mr. Merriland, it appears that from the first he made that gentleman his confidant. No one, however, knew anything about that circumstance until long afterwards. Had it been known, perhaps

things might have taken a different course. The question of whether events are predestined sometimes rises before the mind, and circumstances often incline it to think things foreordained which arise solely from the ungoverned passions of an hour, nay, a minute. At any rate, having no pretensions to the character of a philosopher, I must leave intellects more subtle than mine to expound such questions as best they can, and merely confine myself to a statement of facts as they arose.

I one day observed signs of extreme agitation in Miss Englebridge, but thinking it probably arose from some unkindness of the young ladies, I advised her to retire to her own room, and said I would take down word that she was indisposed, which indeed was no story. The young ladies were very rude and unamiable about it, and the next day the governess came down as usual; but I afterwards noticed that Mr. Merriland was by no means so attentive to her as before, and yet sometimes he gazed on her with an appearance of the deepest interest. It unhappily chanced that I was not the only person who remarked this change, one quite unaccountable; for Mr. Spencer still visited the Park, and his attentions to Miss Englebridge, whenever she appeared in company, were devoted. But that she was seldom allowed to do by Mrs. Merriland, who seemed daily more and more to dislike the unfortunate girl.

Of course many of the things I am now relating I came to the knowledge of only long after they happened. I soon perceived, that Mrs. Merriland watched her husband and Miss Englebridge, whenever he and the young lady chanced to meet. It was not known then whether Mr. Spencer had become an accepted lover; but, at any rate, Miss Englebridge wore on the third finger of her right hand a ring of some value, which most persons had seen previously on the little finger of the young clergyman.

We, in the servants' hall,—for I did not, as some housekeepers do, confine myself exclusively to my own room, but mingled with my fellows occasionally,—used to speculate on these affairs of the family whom we served. Mrs. Merriland, I promise you, was no favourite with her domestics, whom she regarded much as negro slaves were looked on in some wealthy southern planter's family. We have often remarked what a good planter's wife she would have made. Neither she nor the young ladies were at all popular in the servants' hall. Ah, my dear Mistress Taffetas, I little thought what misery was in store for us all. I declare I am almost sorry I began the story, but as you and Betsy seem interested in it, I'll go on and finish it.

At last, we noticed that things seemed taking a very odd turn. Mrs. Merriland, on the plea of indisposition, frequently absented herself for whole

days from the dinner-table, and other gatherings of the family; and if she appeared about as usual, there was a strange change in her manner which we all noted. Instead of her usual haughty, off-hand way, her commands were now given in a suppressed tone, that bespoke her endeavouring to conceal some powerful emotion; instead, too, of her usual disdainful way to the governess, she treated that young person with scrupulous and deferential civility, which those who knew her disposition best shook their heads at, in silent deprecation. Her very smoothness bespoke the deadliest hate.

I had attended on Mrs. Merriland one morning to receive her orders for the day, when she desired the little black boy, who waited on her exclusively—as was then the fashion among great ladies—to inform Miss Englebridge that she wished to see her. The young lady, pale and anxious, came to the summons before I had left the room. Mrs. Merriland requested her to be seated. The governess, however, did not obey the gracious invitation, but "begged to know Mrs. Merriland's commands."

"Oh! no commands, my dear," said the lady; "only, as the girls are not yet, I know, prepared with their lessons, I wished to ask you the favour of walking with me to the Lily-mere, to get some of the lilies growing there, which I wish you to arrange in a group, and paint for me on a pair of

screens, that I am going to present to Mr. Spencer for his new house, which I hear he is furnishing." Miss Englebridge coloured, but immediately assented to the proposition, and then withdrew to attire herself.

The next time I saw these two ladies was from the window of the housekeeper's room. They were then walking close together, and took the road which led to the Lily-mere, a large ornamental piece of water in a remote part of the park, in which a fine and rare kind of water-lilies were cultivated. It was some considerable time after that, requiring the services of the boy Mungo, I rang his bell. This boy was about twelve years old, and, usually speaking, one of the idlest young rascals that ever a household was plagued with. He feared no one but his mistress, and the moment her back was turned he would rush out of doors, for play, mischief, and scrapes of every variety. On the present occasion, finding he did not answer the bell, I went out to seek him, and on the step of a glass-door which led out into the park, I discovered the boy, as I thought, fast asleep; but on approaching him I found he was hiding his face in his hands, and trembling as though he had the ague:—and what a face it was, when I turned it towards the light, distorted with evident fear, and beads of perspiration standing on his brow! I asked him hastily where he had been, and if he were ill; but he

answered not a word, and ran into the house, to his own room, I suppose, for he had a room to himself, being a great favourite of Mrs. Merriland's, with whom he had lived ever since he was seven years old. Just as I was about to call him back, and chide him for the want of respect he showed by running away when I questioned him, I heard a loud cry in the park, and looking out, I perceived many of the labourers engaged about the grounds and the enclosures, running wildly to and fro in great confusion. After that the report came to the house—how I know not, so suddenly and strange did it all come about—that something terrible had happened; no one seemed to know precisely where or how, or what had actually occurred. Mr. Merriland just at that moment returned home from his ride, accompanied by Mr. Spencer. The cry then rose—"To the Lily-mere!" and the two gentlemen spurred their horses in that direction.

When I heard the place indicated, I ran off too, not waiting for bonnet or mantle, and I arrived there in time to witness a sight I shall never forget. Some men had just brought up the body of Miss Englebridge from the water. There it lay on the grass, the roots of the lilies clinging to it, and mingling with the slimy river-weeds in which she had become entangled, and so had sank. Mr. Spencer was kneeling by the side of the body, himself more like a corpse than a living

man; and Mr. Merriland appeared as if bereft of his senses. His wife stood at a little distance, her hat off, her hair dishevelled about her shoulders, and her brow, cheeks, and lips white as those of the poor young girl stretched in death before her. They began at last, the first burst of horror over, to question Mrs. Merriland; and she answered hoarsely, that Miss Englebridge and herself had been walking by the edge of the water, and in the attempt to get some of the lilies, the young lady had overbalanced herself and fallen into the lake; that she had sunk directly, and though she rose again, she had by that time floated out of reach, rendering any assistance Mrs. Merriland might have given unavailing; that she had then, in terror, alarmed the men who were working in various parts of the park.

No one doubted this story, and after many efforts had been used to resuscitate the body, it was conveyed on hurdles to the hall. By the time it was brought there, a surgeon had arrived, and fresh efforts were used, but in vain; and the doctor, who knew none of the circumstances, said it was all labour in vain, for that the body had lain in the water an hour. Of course he was told that such was not the case, but he persisted in his opinion. Soon after another doctor was summoned, and when he came he said precisely the same thing.

When all chance of recovery was hopeless, I

went to my own room, and was weeping bitterly for the sad fate of the poor young thing, when I heard a low tap at my door. I got up, and opening it, beheld the negro-boy, his countenance still convulsed with agitation, and still trembling, poor child, from head to foot. I brought him into the room, and asked if he had heard the sad news. He glared at me with his white eyeballs, and then burst into a loud, uncontrollable fit of weeping. When he was a bit quieter, he asked for his master. I told him he was closeted with Mr. Spencer, and that both were in great trouble and grief. The boy then said he desired to speak with the young clergyman; and, struck with his peculiar manner and apparent tribulation of mind, I told him I would go to Mr. Spencer and acquaint him with his wish, adding, on my own account, that I dared to say, if he had anything particular to communicate, the gentleman would see him. The child evincing the greatest anxiety for me to do so, I went immediately.

Though Mr. Spencer was overwhelmed by the blow which had fallen on his hopes, he came out to me directly; and when I explained the boy's earnest wish to see him, at once consented to do so, desiring I would remain meanwhile with Mr. Merriland, who, stretched on a couch in his library, was indulging in the bitterest grief. I must say, at the time I thought, all things considered, this was strange, and wondered rather at the bereaved

lover's sympathy for a friend, who I thought on such a terrible occasion should himself have been the consoler. Alas! we are but short-sighted mortals.

Mr. Spencer was absent about half-an-hour. When he returned there was a strange excitement in his manner. He had with him the black boy, holding him tightly by the hand, as if afraid he would escape. The boy was still agitated, and his eyes flashed. "Merriland, my dear friend," said Mr. Spencer, "something of the deepest importance has transpired. If this boy's testimony is to be relied on, a member of your family—I grieve to say it—is deeply implicated;—one," he continued, faltering, "very, very near to you in relation." Mr. Merriland started up; his eyes, however, only questioned his friend, his tongue seemed to cleave to his mouth. "Will you," said Mr. Spencer, "permit me to send for Mrs. Merriland?" The blood rushed to my master's pale face, but too much alarmed to reply, he bowed his head.

Mrs. Merriland came in a few minutes. She was of an ashen grey hue, and her dark eyes glistened with suppressed excitement. There was a short interval of silence. I imagine, in the agitation of that moment, my presence was overlooked, more especially as I stood in a curtained recess by one of the windows. I must confess that not being ordered to go, I had the curiosity to re-

main, not respectful, perhaps, but natural enough just then.

"Madam!" said Mr. Spencer, after a pause —"apart from my own irrevocable loss, which reduces me to despair, I have unhappily also to perform a dreadful duty. This boy, your own attendant, is ready to make oath that he saw you push Miss Englebridge into the Lily-mere waters!" She met the shock unmoved, and then for the first time the truth flashed on me. I remembered her look when she sent for the poor governess that morning. Had she been innocent, I said to myself, she would at least have looked astonished by such a plain accusation, one made without hesitation on Mr. Spencer's part. Her husband had started to his feet, and was appealing to his wife to deny its truth. She had her eyes fixed on the boy, but he never quailed. He spoke out—he said that when his mistress and Miss Englebridge quitted the house, he watched them out of sight, and then quitted it too for a ramble. He went towards the Lily-mere to get lilies, which he had been forbidden to take; when he got there, his mistress and the young lady were walking by the water's edge. He hid himself behind a clump of trees, meaning to watch them away, and then to get some lilies. Mrs. Merriland and her companion were deep in conversation, of which he could only hear unconnected

words of anger from his mistress. Suddenly, he said, both being close to the water, he saw his mistress drop a little behind Miss Englebridge, who was nearest the edge, and raising her arm a little, beheld her push the governess into the mere; that he was too frightened to stir, or call. After Miss Englebridge had risen and sank again, Mrs. Merriland sat down by the water's side, and covering her face with her hands, sat so for a long while, and when sure the young lady had indeed sunk never to rise again, he crept away, and ran swiftly in order to reach the house before his mistress. The boy just then spying me out in my corner, called on me to witness the state I had found him in, when sitting on the step. I of course readily corroborated that part of his statement. A deep silence followed this revelation. Mrs. Merriland alone preserved entire calmness, till her husband's frantic reproaches seemed at last to sting her beyond self-control.

"It is well," said she bitterly, "for you to turn my accuser so readily on the unsupported evidence of a stupid boy; but I can easily believe that you would gladly think your wife guilty of the death of your vile associate in guilt." Both gentlemen started at this.

"Woman!" said Mr. Merriland, "explain your meaning; she to whom you affix that sentence was as pure as one of your own girls."

"What!" said his wife, advancing towards him, and hissing out the words between her closed teeth—"did I not one day in this very room—see, by the screen there, that girl folded in your arms, whilst you, kissing her forehead, were lavishing on her the tenderest words? I did not face you at the time—I retired, and kept to myself the knowledge I had arrived at; but watching again and again, I saw the same caresses, secretly bestowed. Dare you deny what I say? the shameless creature, whom you compare to your own innocent children, and whom for your own base purposes you would have given in marriage to Mr. Spencer, was——"

"Your husband's daughter, Madam," interrupted that gentleman. "Would that he had told you so before, if this indeed has been the motive for your terrible crime!

"Before Mr. Merriland knew you, he had been the husband of a young French lady, who eloped with him from a convent, where she was passing her noviciate. She died twelve months after their marriage, in giving birth to a daughter, who when two years old was stolen from my friend's house during his absence abroad. No efforts of his could trace the child. She had been taken by an agent of her mother's father, who believed it a holy action to snatch his daughter's infant from a heretic parent. Julie was brought up in the Catholic faith,

from which she seceded on the death of her grandfather, who had previously revealed to her the real circumstance of her name and birth. But as on his marriage with you, Mr. Osborne adopted his present name, she could not gain any intelligence respecting him, and was indeed thrown on the world without any provision. Miss Englebridge, resolving then to turn her talents to account, answered your advertisement, and came here—to meet her death.

"When I first became attached to Miss Englebridge, which name she had adopted, having been that of her English nurse, I confided the secret of my affection, Madam, to your husband; and at my request he questioned her respecting her connexions and her family. She candidly told him all, and it was thus with astonishment and emotion that the father and daughter were re-united. Mr. Merriland, confiding to me the history of his early years, gave me the hand of his child; but frankly confessed his great unwillingness that you, his wife, should know this story. I then represented the folly of concealment; but your pride and violence of temper, effectually deterred him from giving you his confidence. He determined, therefore, to await his daughter's marriage, when a husband's affection would at least protect her from your malice. This concealment has caused, indeed, most fatal misery.

Mrs. Merriland, in a state of convulsive agitation, prepared to quit the room. Mr. Spencer

rose and prevented her. So much time had elapsed, that it was now nigh sunset. "Madam," he said, "you must consider yourself in custody till the affair be investigated." He rang the bell, and a servant entering, he desired to know if the legal officer he had sent for had arrived. The answer given in the affirmative, a constable from M——, the nearest town, was introduced into the room. Mrs. Merriland smiled haughtily; but I could see it was the smile of despair. "You will at least allow me to be imprisoned in my own room," was all she said.

Her request being acceded to, the proud mistress of that splendid mansion was led to her chamber, a guarded felon, the door being locked and every avenue secured, the officer taking his station in a chair outside.

About nine that evening, Mrs. Merriland rang her bell, and I answered it. She requested to have hot water in a foot-pan. This being her usual practice, I immediately gave orders to comply with her wish; and likewise, at her desire, a large brass kettle was brought and placed on the hob, that the temperature of the water in the bath might be kept up. She complained of a chill; and after seeing her wants supplied, and leaving refreshment on the table, I retired, and the constable locked the door for the night.

I prepared breakfast next morning, and took up some to Mrs. Merriland's room at the usual hour

of her rising. The constable was hardly awake, but he said all had been quiet through the night, and unlocked the door. I noticed how dark the room was, and conjectured that Mrs. Merriland had not yet risen. On entering, however, I observed that she reposed in an easy chair, her head leaning, her eyes shut, and her feet in the bath; the contents of which appeared deep crimson. The officer entered the room. We threw open the shutters, and the bright morning light flooded the chamber, but the eyes of my mistress, Mrs. Merriland of Commontree Park, were closed for ever on this world. She had bled to death; having, by means of a lancet belonging to Mr. Merriland's case of instruments, opened a vein in her ankle.

Thus, in that house of death, was the crime of suicide added to that of murder. Many of the servants at once quitted the house. Of course there was a coroner's inquest, but it was kept as close as possible; and though there was no getting over a verdict, still money can do a great deal, and all it could do was done on this occasion. The funerals were quite private, and terribly sad to witness.

Commontree Park has been shut up since then, and the great house now is little better than a ruin. Of course the neighbourhood decided it was haunted. Mr. Merriland took his daughters to Bath, where he did not survive long; and after his death, the young ladies married.

Mr. Spencer went abroad as a missionary to Africa; and returning home some years ago, was wrecked and perished with the rest of the passengers.

As for me, I had to seek a new service, and try to banish from my memory all the sad doings at Commontree Hall.

I declare I have got quite low-spirited over this story; so put on your bonnet, little Mary, and we'll take a turn in the Park.

The Soldier's Wife.

VIVIDLY before my eyes come the face and figure of Phillis, Countess of Charmayne; I mean as a living woman, for her portrait at Charmayne House scarcely gives an adequate idea of the spiritual intelligence of her countenance, nor the matchless grace of her form, which proved charming enough to elevate her from a very humble order of society to the rank of an earl's wife.

It was in her lowly position of dairy-maid to Sir Cuthbert Vernon's family that I first knew her. Phillis Mayberry had received from pious parents the rudiments of education, a thing rather unusual for one of her class at that period. I always believe that, give a person the power to read and write, and there are few stations—natural intellect and circumstances permitting—to which they may not aspire. I was lodging at a farm-house close to Vernon Hall, for the sake of my health, and had with me one of my daughter's children for company, when I first met with Phillis. Little I thought, as she kindly gave my

grand-daughter a draught of new milk, for the child was weary with walking and thirsty, passing by Sir Cuthbert's dairy,—little, I say, did I think I should make her first Court-suit, and help to dress her in it; but I did. However, it is a long story, and my readers must have a little patience to get through its romantic details. By little and little, when Phillis and I grew better acquainted, I learned her antecedents. She was only nineteen, and she was a widow. In her native village of Dewthorn, in Buckinghamshire, she had no longer a friend or relative; left an orphan at seventeen, she had listened to the addresses of a youth only four years her senior, and married him, ere either knew how a maintenance was to be procured. They did little better than starve for the first few months of their married life; and one day, Geoffrey Mayberry, her husband, enlisted; and a little before the year 1777, he was sent to fight against the Americans, still waging their war of independence. It was a sorrowful parting, for the young couple were attached, but they looked forward towards meeting again. Their hopes, however, were frustrated; for Geoffrey perished in the first engagement he entered. This intelligence was brought to the young widow some months after by an invalided comrade, unaccompanied by arrears of pay, or any trifling token taken from the dead man's person. He had been rifled on

the field, it would seem—not even the locket with his wife's hair in it, which he wore round his neck, was found on him. And so Phillis, who served a neighbouring farmer, no longer caring to remain in the village of her birth, through the sad memories with which it was associated, resolved to make a grand effort, and get a living nearer to the metropolis. She was so well skilled in the management of a dairy, and bore such an excellent character, that she had small difficulty in obtaining a service. She entered into the family of Sir Cuthbert Vernon, who had an estate about forty miles from London, where he mostly resided; and where she had served with diligence and satisfaction nearly twelve months when I first saw her.

I must say, that being an admirer of beauty, it was the personal charms of this young woman that first attracted me. Of a fair complexion, with large dark blue eyes, black, silky hair, expressive features, and Hebe-like figure, her person was very charming. At the time I speak of there was at the Hall, on a visit, a distinguished nobleman—George, Earl of Charmayne; not over young 'tis true, having already passed his fiftieth year, but of a constitution hale, hearty, and sound. My Lord Charmayne, soon after his sojourn at the Hall, whither he had gone for a rest during the recess of the House—evinced a remarkable predilection for the produce of Sir

Cuthbert's dairy, and he soon betrayed a still greater predilection for the fair being that served him with that produce. They said Sir Cuthbert at first rallied his noble guest, but very soon he looked grave upon the matter. However, my Lord Charmayne thought, and with some reason, that after living a bachelor to the sober age of fifty-two, he had a right to please himself in the matter of marriage; for, in spite of sneers and insinuations, which are sure to arise when elderly noblemen pay attentions to poor and beautiful girls, his lordship, I know, never breathed a word to Phillis derogatory to her virtue. The young woman and myself by this time had grown more intimate than our relative positions—so soon to be reversed—appeared to warrant, but she was so refined in her ways, so eager to acquire information, so desirous of doing right, that I felt great interest in her welfare. I soon taxed her with Lord Charmayne's attentions, and with many blushes she owned the truth; but she herself did not for a moment believe that he sought her from honourable motives. She had therefore, she told me, done all in her power to suppress his courtesies, and behaved as coldly as her situation permitted of towards her employer's guest. She could scarcely have found a better way to fix him. Lord Charmayne, once thoroughly satisfied as to Phillis's good principle and disinterestedness, with his sex's usual impulsive-

ness rapidly made up his own mind. After making himself perfectly cognizant of Phillis's position, connexions, and former habits—for which purpose he visited in person her native village of Dewthorn—he, quite convinced that as maid and wife, in her station, she had been exemplary, overlooked her poverty and low birth, and offered her his hand. Perhaps you think Phillis should have refused it. Not so; the young woman was by no means devoid of an honourable ambition. Here was a lot offered her, surpassing the wildest dreams of the most aspiring village beauty, and really liking Lord Charmayne, and feeling certain that as a husband she could love him, she accepted the offer; and like the generality of her sex, when she had irrevocably fixed her fate, she came to ask my advice about it. I congratulated the Countess in perspective, and told her sincerely that I thought she did wisely. Had she, indeed, been about to wed extreme age, disease, and dotage, none more than myself would have pointed out to this friendless orphan the folly of wearing golden fetters.

When Sir Cuthbert Vernon and his family found that matters had arrived at this crisis between their beautiful dairy-maid and their noble friend, they wisely gave the affair their countenance and support, conferring thereby a weight of obligation on the future Countess and her Lord, only to be estimated by those who

know how jealously patricians admit into their order and society intruders of plebeian rank.

Never, sure, did any one glide with more ease and grace into her new dignities than my Lady Charmayne. The marriage was solemnized directly settlements could be drawn, and the Countess fitted as became her rank. I need not say our house had the wedding order. "And dear Mistress Taffetas must not only make my new clothes, but show me how to wear them," said Phillis—as I shall call her for the last time—when she came to town to choose her jewels and clothes. She lived at our house in strict retirement until all was concluded; and then I accompanied her, in Lord Charmayne's travelling carriage, down to Sir Cuthbert Vernon's, from whose house she was married as privately as possible.

The newly-wedded pair went down to the Earl's seat in ———shire directly; and when they arrived some months afterwards in town, and my Lady Charmayne sent for me to measure her for her presentation suit, I scarcely could recognise in the elegant woman before me, who warmly pressed my hands, the beautiful but uneducated country girl I had parted with. It was truly wonderful to see how soon Lady Charmayne, observant and possessing fine tact, had adopted the manners of the class to which she now belonged. She was universally received—for the Earl's posi-

tion in the country, and his immense influence, would not easily admit of people slighting him; and, indeed, few persons knew the true condition from which Lady Charmayne had been taken. Most people believed her to be the daughter of some country gentleman; one who, but for Lord Charmayne's love, might have been an Abigail, or a poor curate's wife. You cannot much blame my lord and lady that they did not contradict these reports, and at any rate, the Countess possessed one advantage in having no poor relations to disgrace and annoy her husband. I believe this was a point on which he congratulated himself much. As for myself, Lady Charmayne, who had no trace of haughtiness or arrogance in her noble simplicity of nature, would have treated me on the same footing as before marriage; but I reminded her that our circumstances were now very unequal, that I should always feel proud of her confidence privately, if she would still deign to give it, but that Phillis the dairy-maid and Phillis Countess of Charmayne were two very different persons, and that so henceforth I must regard them: "love them," I added, "both equally, I must ever do." Lady Charmayne seemed at first greatly put out; but presently—"My ever dear Mistress Taffetas," she said, "you are the best and wisest of women, —it is hard—but—but I believe you are right. Here, in my heart, dearest Mistress Taffetas, is

a corner ever yours, for you have been truly kind to me. And now good bye; give this to little Mary for my sake. Nay—what! refuse *me!* Now go—farewell." The note-case she put into my hand contained money to the value of one hundred pounds; the same, little Mary, was invested for you, and has since borne good fruits.

With the exception of business visits, and one or two confidential ones occurring at the time of the birth of the Earl's son and heir, I saw little of the Countess of Charmayne for five or six subsequent years. At the end of that time Lord Charmayne, whose political influence had reached its height, announced his intention of giving a splendid fête at Charmayne House, ——— Square. This grand entertainment was intended to rally round him his political party. It was on the eve of a great contest, and I was personally summoned to decide on the Countess's dress for the occasion. It took much study and attention, but at last we determined—emerald green satin, relieved with pale blush colour and silver trimmings. It was necessary that I should superintend the dressing on that eventful night myself. I little thought whither my care was to tend. I was ushered, about eight o'clock, into my Lady's dressing-room, and there I attired her whom admiring beholders would have declared had been bred all her life in a Court. The last touch was given, the jewels added, and a more

beautiful creature I never beheld. She contemplated her own appearance in the large mirror with complacency. The wife of the village rustic, of the private soldier, had faded away in the halo of rank and wealth and luxury, even as the mist of a summer's morning fades before the beams of the sun.

Her boy was brought to her to kiss before he went to rest. He was a noble child; the mother's heart beat high and proud as she beheld him, his blue eyes, so like her own, dropping with sleep. "God bless my little son," she said, and he was taken to bed by his nurse; while his mother prepared for her descent into her splendid rooms to receive her distinguished guests.

There was to be a prince of the blood-royal present that night to partake Lord Charmayne's hospitality. He arrived in due time, and distinguished the noble hostess particularly. The prince was about handing Lady Charmayne down to supper, when the guests became aware that there was a disturbance below. Loud words, fierce replies, scuffling, and a desperate resistance became audible. The Countess, though she hardly knew why, turned pale, and looked affrighted. The Earl quitted the room. He went into the hall; a man was there in the dress of a disbanded soldier. He insisted, in rude and inebriated tones, on seeing Lady Charmayne. When they demanded who he was, he told them with deliberate

confidence that he was my Lady's first husband. The household was in perfect consternation, no one knew what to do. The Earl appeared at this crisis, but his presence only made the intruder more violent. The soldier asserted that he was the real husband of the Countess of Charmayne. Her Lord was aghast; he knew the circumstances of his lady's previous marriage, and feared, through some fatal mistake, this story might be true. He retired to his library, and the drunken man was brought thither also. As for my Lady, she got an inkling of the matter, through some officious servant, and was overwhelmed with consternation.

The company, amazed and confused, rapidly dispersed. The royal guest ordered his carriage, the others disappeared with him. The lights were extinguished, the feast was but half consumed, and the house grew by degrees silent and hushed. When sufficiently rallied, the Earl requested his lady to come into the library, and she fainted as soon as she set eyes on the tipsy being lolling in one of the best easy chairs. When she came to herself, and the man demanded if he were not Geoffrey Mayberry, she never denied it. She looked and looked, till the end was, she was carried away insensible. My Lord bore the blow like a man. He suffered most for her. What was to be the end,—yield up his treasure? Never! Buy Geoffrey off?—equally impossible

Until the man was sober, what could be done? He was kept there until morning, and mean time I was sent for. I cannot to my dying day forget that scene—the sweet lady stretched on her bed, horror-stricken; my Lord by her side, not knowing what to say or do. Late as it was, I thought day would never dawn: when it came, the man was examined. He bore a look of guilt and dissipation in his face. If he really proved to be her husband, never, my lady said, was man so changed. But was she not changed herself, and was it more difficult to recognise sober and steady Geoffrey Mayberry in this tipsy boasting fool, than Phillis the rustic, in the elegant Countess of Charmayne?

The Earl's first step was to summon his solicitor. He, a shrewd man of business, when made acquainted with the facts, knew not what to think. The soldier produced proofs—the locket with his wife's hair, which Phillis had herself hung round his neck; letters, which none but himself had possession of. But the worst proof was, the Countess's own recognition of her first husband. True! he was older and more worn, and more wicked-looking, than when they parted; but there were the features, the shape, the voice, allowing for the change effected by foreign service and time.

The man was closely examined by the solicitor, who had with him a junior partner, a young man

who had made his way up from a clerk's desk by his shrewdness and cleverness in testing facts. Geoffrey Mayberry's own account was this:—He lay for hours on the field, and was actually conveyed away with the dead, but he came to himself, and crawled with difficulty some distance, and reaching the house of one of the colonists was there taken in—tended, and made convalescent. That thinking he had had enough of fighting, and not deeming a soldier's life agreeable, he eventually reached the back woods. There he lived the roving life of a settler, until joining a skirmish against an Indian tribe, he was taken prisoner, and escaped scalping by the intervention of the chief, who having lost his own son in warfare, adopted the young man. Only within a twelvemonth of his appearance in ——— Square, had he been able to make his escape; that he had been to his wife's native village, and inquiring for her, was told of her marriage with a peer of exalted rank, and he had therefore come to claim her.

The tale was feasible enough, and if the Earl gave this soldier into custody for desertion, Mr. Harding the solicitor said, that would only tend to further exposure. As it was, the man seemed rather to wish to compound for the matter, than actually to compel Lady Charmayne again to live with him. To any such hints, however, the Earl was deaf. He knew well that his Phillis

would never be his, but with honour; and he was right in his perception of Lady Charmayne's character. In taking the utmost pains to cultivate her mind, she did not the less estimate morality. Lady Charmayne, as she must still be called, retired with her infant son, to a house taken for her use by Mr. Harding—and oh! how bitter that parting with a beloved husband, to be called husband no more. Yet they parted with the approval of their conscience, and submitted to Heaven the termination of this unhappy affair.

But Mr. Colson, Mr. Harding's partner, determined not to yield the matter so easily. It is no disparagement to this young man, that he knew, if he succeeded in proving the so-called Geoffrey Mayberry an impostor—his fortune in life was secure. There was a shifting light in the claimant's eyes, which proclaimed falsehood to the experienced reader of character. After examining, and cross examining, he still remained unsatisfied. At last, he determined to visit Lady Charmayne's native village. He went down there, and was soon employed in interrogating the villagers who had known Phillis and her husband from their earliest youth.

Meanwhile, the invalided soldier who had brought to Phillis the tidings of her first husband's death was advertised for, and the offer of reward soon produced him. He could, however, merely testify

to the fact of having seen the body of his comrade on the field, to having searched it for papers or money, that he found none, and that Geoffrey Mayberry's name was amongst those reported dead. That he might have been mistaken as to the soldier's actual death was but too probable, and indeed, when confronted with the man, he asserted that, to the best of his belief, allowing for the changes effected by years, hardships, and the life of a backwoodsman, it was Geoffrey Mayberry himself who stood there. This intelligence was communicated to Mr. Colson by Mr. Harding, from town, while his young coadjutor was busy in searching for records of Geoffrey Mayberry's family. The shrewd practitioner perceived at once some slight grounds for hope in the fact that the presumed dead body had been at the time it was searched devoid of property, which property was afterwards produced by the presumed dead man himself, who must have had it on his person, even if his story of resuscitation and escape were true. The only glimpse of hope afforded was that some plunderer had despoiled the body of Geoffrey Mayberry, and was now setting up for purposes of fraud a false claim. But how account for the resemblance,—so strong as to induce Phillis herself to believe the claimant her husband, and the soldier to vouch that it was his old comrade?

Mr. Colson, of course, had applied to Lady

Charmayne herself for particulars of her first husband's family, but to his surprise she could afford scarcely any information on that head. Phillis had herself been bred and born at Dewthorn, but her husband and his mother, who was a widow, had come from a distant village; nor could the Countess—if she may still be so termed—remember the name of the hamlet or its county of which Geoffrey was a native. Mr. Colson applied, therefore, to the self-styled Mayberry himself for the needful information. It was afforded eagerly, without hesitation—Treewheal, Dorsetshire; though he added that, he himself being the last of his family, no one now was living to give any information. Mr. Colson thought differently, however; and while putting down in his pocket-book the name of the village, his quick eye noticed in the man a sudden repentance, scarcely compatible, he thought, with innocence. Geoffrey Mayberry had in his possession the certificate of his marriage with Phillis Grey, but no certificate of his own birth: that had been unattainable at Dewthorn, which village indeed afforded no proofs of any circumstance, except those well known already. But if this man were indeed but an impostor, he had committed an oversight in giving the name of his native place.

Mr. Colson, who had returned to London after obtaining this intelligence, departed for Dorsetshire instantly, not, however, without securing

the person of the presumed Geoffrey, by a process which his knowledge of the law rendered available—for if likely to be detected, the impostor, he argued, would abscond, leaving them utterly in the dark.

He arrived at Treewheal, and found some old people who remembered the Mayberry family well. Geoffrey's father had been a small farmer, but when he died, Mistress Mayberry did not carry on the business, but removed with her youngest son to a distant county, where he got work as a day-labourer. "Geoffrey was a good lad," Mr. Colson's informant added; "the old people had had trouble enough with their eldest son, who had fled the country years before and was believed dead."—Ah! here was a clue at last.—"Geoffrey grew so like his brother," the gossip went on to say, "that folks wouldn't have known them apart, only Geoffrey was well inclined, whereas Joseph had taken to poaching and drinking and other vile things, that at last brought down the law on him. They got him off, however, but none of them knew much about him afterwards; it went well nigh to break the old man's heart, and he died soon after." This was all Mr. Colson could glean, but he thought it enough. The parish register was searched, the certificates of Joseph and Geoffrey's birth obtained; and armed with these Mr. Colson returned to town, his heart beating high with hope and expectation.

When he arrived in London events had taken a vastly different turn to anything he had anticipated. I have stated that the self-called Geoffrey Mayberry was placed under strict surveillance, not in a prison, but where he was well guarded, and at the same time given whatever he desired in the way of rations and drink. He was not slow to take advantage of this last circumstance, and I fear, plying him with liquor was one of the means relied on to elicit the truth in some unguarded moment. He was, however, too wary for this—but being left one day, sitting by the fire, in a state of stupid intoxication, he fell down, and was seriously burnt before assistance came. He was conveyed to an hospital; but no hopes from the first were entertained that he would recover, and Mr. Colson watched by his bed-side for many anxious days. The shock to the man's system produced exhaustion, and death stared him in the face. Mr. Colson told him of his discovery, and taxed him with the imposture which he directly, though sullenly, confessed. A magistrate being summoned, a formal deposition of his fraud was made. He was Joseph Mayberry, who having enlisted likewise in the English service, had discovered on the field the body of his own brother, rifled it, and then escaped to the back woods—that subsequently coming home, and hearing of his sister-in-law's brilliant marriage, he thought it might be turned

to profitable account. Had he not committed the fatal error of disclosing his birth-place, oblivious of the parish register, truth and justice might have been much longer delayed. Shortly after signing this deposition, he expired.

Mr. Colson advanced rapidly in his profession. He became very famous, I believe, before his death. My Lord and Lady Charmayne were re-united only to feel how true and enduring is love founded in purity and honour. My Lady survived the Earl many years, and was rich in the affection and filial duty of her son William, fourth Earl of Charmayne.

A Story of Hallow'een.

WELL, Mary, as you have an hour to spare, I'll tell you the tale of the Morseheath family, which was related to me by Jenny Robertson, whose confidential position with the present Countess has enabled her to learn some curious secrets connected with that ancient house. So now get your pen and ink, and I'll begin.

Two young girls were seated on the floor before the fire, in a room wainscoted with oak, and hung with family pictures, at Castle Inchinnan, situated in the Western Highlands of Scotland. They were the ladies Madelaine and Edith Glenroy, the daughters of the Scottish peer, Earl Morseheath.

Lady Madelaine was eighteen years old, and her sister two years her junior. They were intently listening to an old woman, who, sitting in the wide chimney corner, filled the eager ears of the sisters with wild spells and legends. It was about five in the afternoon, and the month being November, darkness had already set in, the embers

of a large wood-fire throwing a Rembrandt colouring over the room, the sisters and the old nurse made a happy study for a painter. The night, too, threatened to be rough and *eerie;* and the girls listened to the old woman's mysterious details of warlock, second sight, wraiths, and witches' incantations, until their young blood congealed in their veins, and they feared to stir. The old woman, pleased at the impression she made, went on oracularly—

"An' this is just Hallow'een night its ain sel —when a' the bad spirits are abroad, an' them wha hae the courage may speer their future fate, and ken it whate'er it may be."

"Which way, Eldred?" asked Lady Edith, creeping closer to her sister. "I think I should like to try——"

The old woman scowled at her. "Ye! my wee bairnie," she said contemptuously, "ye hae nae the plack to do it wi' Nae; but my Madelaine there has the wit an' spirit baith. Ye mun gae, bairns, to the Witherleigh oak, at the stroke o' midnicht, an' when ye get there, ye maun tak a handfu' o' the earth, an' pluck three leaves of the tree, saying these words:—

'By this earth which fed the tree,
By the might o' oak leaves three,
Spirits that do haunt the nicht,
Show a vision to my sight;
By the earth and oak leaves three,
Show him that is my mate to be!'

Sprinkle the earth around a' the while, an' the man ye are to wed will start up before ye."

The sisters kept a long silence, and fixed their eyes on the fire. At length Lady Madelaine, the eldest, rose up, and said slowly, "I think, Eldred, I shall make the experiment; what say you, Edith? Will you dare go with me, and try the fates of this wild Hallow'een?" Edith shuddered; she placed her hand, however, on her sister's shoulder, and said, "I would go anywhere, dear, with you."—Madelaine kissed her; and saying gaily, "Then at the weird hour, Edith, we will venture, if you can keep up your courage so long," she quitted the room, and went to dress for the evening meal, to which the Earl usually invited those gentlemen who had joined him in the morning's hunt.

At twelve that night, the two girls, wrapped up in grey plaids, went forth to the Witherleigh oak, a huge tree partially scathed by lightning, which stood on a mound about half a mile from Inchinnan. Edith trembled with fear, as her sister, tall and towering in figure, supported her on the way. The night was stormy. Low soughs of wind rose among the hills, and wailed through the stricken branches, till gathering sudden force, they lashed the neighbouring torrents and swollen rivers, and with new fury dashed away, roaring among the mountains. But it was not the wind nor the late and lonely hour that frighted these girls; it was the terror of superstition, which believed the mid-

night air to be filled with evil spirits. They trembled at every trivial sound and sight; at least, Lady Edith did, but her sister, though sometimes quailing before the blast, soothed her fears much as a nurse soothes a frightened child. They reached, at length, the gigantic and storm-worn oak, full of gnarls and hollows, standing a huge memorial of other times; and then Lady Madelaine, quitting her sister's arm, proposed performing the incantation first. She could scarcely prevail on the terrified girl to remain quiet while she—gathering a handful of earth, and plucking three of the few withered leaves which yet remained from the late autumn of the Highlands—prepared to dare her destiny. "What are the words, Edith?" said she, half laughing, half in fear. Her plaid had fallen from her head, and she stood on the mound under the tree, in her light garments looking like a spectre. But Edith, when the momentous time had arrived, was trembling with terror. "Silly child," said Madelaine, her spirit rising with excitement; "you would make a noble heroine, truly. But stay while I remember the rhyme; and she began in a low voice to sprinkle the earth and repeat the lines—

'By this earth which fed the tree,
By the might o' oak leaves three,
Spirits that do haunt the nicht,
Show a vision to my sight;
By the earth and oak leaves three,
Show him that is my mate to be!'"

As she uttered the last line, the moon which had been obscured by the stormy clouds burst suddenly forth, and revealed by its light the figure of a man, gazing up at Madelaine, from a pathway leading from the Witherleigh oak to the glen below. With clasped hands he gazed for a moment, and then throwing down something toward the feet of Madelaine, fled rapidly into the thick ravine. As for Edith, the first glimpse had been enough for her. She turned, and swift as a fawn, stopped not till she reached Inchinnan. Madelaine, stricken with superstitious horror, fell senseless on the ground.

She knew not how long she had lain there; when she revived, the wildness of the night had abated, and the moon shone out clear and serene, flooding all around with its silvery light. For an instant, Madelaine, recalling the events of the midnight hour, believed the vision had been the effect of her fancy; when looking down, she perceived close by her the object which the unknown had cast there: she picked it up; it was a white handkerchief steeped in blood. With a shudder Madelaine concealed it in her garments, and, chilled and saddened, took her way home.

Edith was in her own room, half dead with fear. In answer to her sister's questions, she declared that she had only seen the man's figure, not his features, but Madelaine had his face as it appeared in the gleam of moonlight imprinted on her

memory, and felt from thence it would not easily depart. She forbade all mention of their adventure, and Edith, fearful of incurring anger, readily promised obedience.

Six months after the occurrences of that night, the only record of which existed in the handkerchief, carefully preserved by Madelaine, that young lady was one day summoned to a private audience with her parents. With all the state and solemnity which then characterized the commands of parents to their children, she was informed by them that the Earl had betrothed her to the young Lord of Foraymore, who some months previously had, by the violent death of his eldest brother, succeeded to the title and estates. The deceased Lord Foraymore had been discovered in the depths of a neighbouring torrent, bruised and wounded, and he was supposed to have fallen by accident into the precipitous chasm. In those wild regions the laws relative to sudden death were not very active in their operation, and Lord Foraymore's body was duly mourned over and buried with family honours. His only brother was summoned from abroad, and installed as the heir. The estates of Foraymore and Inchinnan joined; and over one of those hard drinking entertainments, with which the nobility of that region too often concluded the fatigues of the morning sport, was the betrothment made.

The young lady's approval was deemed a matter of course, and in reality Madelaine, who had heard of the young lord's noble bearing and accomplishments, made little objection to an event which promised to diversify the monotony of her life. Housewifery and needlework were the principal resources of the chief's daughters in the remote dwellings to which pride and economy necessarily bound the Highland gentry. Small prospect was there for the imaginative Lady Madelaine of London sights, festivities, or gaieties; and as she listened to the congratulations of the dependents about her, she felt inclined to believe herself fortunate in forming such an alliance, rather than sinking into a forlorn old maid, destined, when the head of the family died, to end her days in irksome solitude, as many a "Lady Janet" and "Girzy" had done before her.

Acceding, therefore, dutifully to the Earl's behests, Madelaine spent the intervening time in preparing to receive her suitor; and the day for their first meeting rapidly approached. There was to be a grand entertainment at Inchinnan in honour of the formal betrothal of the pair.

Three weeks previously, a messenger had been despatched to Edinburgh for grand clothes and finery, which arriving at the castle in the evening had taken up the attention of all the female household to a late hour. Edith and Madelaine were long in deciding which of all the dresses provided

for them on this great family occasion should be worn. White silk sacques, over rose satin quilted petticoats, were deemed at length most suitable; and very attractive persons the young ladies were when attired on the morrow suitably to their rank. There was great hope that, amidst the brave and noble gathering of Lairds that day, the young Lady Edith, too, might find her match. The sisters were both lovely, Edith light and slender of figure, with golden hair and blue eyes; while Lady Madelaine, of a lofty beauty, with raven tresses and large black eyes, afforded a fine contrast to her sister's gentler style. Each threw a grace on the other's charms.

The feast was spread, and they waited only for the young Lord Foraymore's arrival. Kinsmen had come far and near to the great family gathering. There were assembled Graemes, Forsters, Fenwicks, Musgraves, with female kinsfolk, whose toilettes showed every variety of fashion, cherished in huge coffers from the days of Queen Anne. Indeed, the change of fashions was scarcely known in the highlands at that time, the date of this story being about the beginning of the eighteenth century; and the elegant attire of the betrothed and her sister excited great admiration among those who had few opportunities of seeing recent alterations in style.

The martial strains of his piper at length announced the looked-for arrival of the Lord Foray-

more, who came accompanied by a great train of vassals, friends, and gentlemen. He was received by my Lord Morseheath with great ceremony, and led into the great drawing-room to behold for the first time his affianced lady. She was standing in the centre of the room supported by her mother and sister, and a bevy of fair young companions—(I use the word "supported" conventionally, for Lady Madelaine Glenroy was at that minute as unembarrassed as if she were but a mere attendant on the betrothal of one of her young kinsfolk). So with the ceremonious courtesies of their day the future pair approached each other; but no sooner did Madelaine raise her eyes to him who sought her hand, than turning whiter than the silk of her flowing robes, she uttered a cry, and fell senseless at his feet.

The company fell into sad confusion at this luckless fit on the part of the bride. Those superstitious Highlanders believed it an evil omen, or that the betrothed maiden was suddenly gifted with second sight, and had seen her own wraith; but, however, they all fell to helping her, and presently she came to herself. As for the young Lord, he was much distressed at such a reception, which betokened, he said privately to the young lady's parents, a dislike to his appearance. They hastened to re-assure him on this point, and urged Madelaine to communicate her reason for being so much overcome. She would not render any,

except that she said a sudden pain had darted through her heart as if she had been stabbed. She did not indeed dare explain the cause, for her family were Papists, and her church, for aught she knew, would have excommunicated her for practising witchcraft. Superstition, indeed, clouded what otherwise she might have deemed happiness. As for my Lord Foraymore, he too turned pale, and became very agitated; but then a young gallant might well feel nervous at being so received by his lady love.

However, though Lady Madelaine could not join the grand banquet, she came down stairs after it, and the ceremony of betrothal was completed. The youthful pair conversed together some time. When the ladies had retired for the night, the gentlemen set in for a grand drinking bout; but my Lord Foraymore stole away as soon as he could, and left his friends to make his excuses, while silently and alone he rode back to his castle. His way lay past the Witherleigh oak, through the glen from whence his own apparition appeared, but he took another and more circuitous route.

When the betrothed next met, all that was unpleasant in their first meeting seemed to have passed away from the memory of both. Whether they loved or not is now impossible to tell; at any rate, shortly after the betrothal, the wedding took place with all the pomp which could attend the ceremony in that remote spot.

The new Lady Foraymore removed to her Lord's castle, and her sister Edith went too, for company to the young wife when her husband might be absent on excursions of the chase or business. Lord Foraymore had scarcely been wedded two months, when the alteration of his manners and habits struck painfully on the hearts of the sisters. From being an attentive, if not a very tender husband, he now absented himself from the castle for whole days, appearing, when he did return, wrapped in gloom, and indulging in the strangest humours. Often did Lady Foraymore, remembering her first mysterious sight of his features, recall that night with a thrill of terror, and shrink from her lord in fear. Six months after their wedding, indeed, all her own spirit had deserted her, and in the sad lady of that gloomy castle few would have recognised the proud-looking bride carried from the halls of Morseheath. Twelvemonths after her marriage she became a mother, and the birth of a fine boy seemed in some shape to divert her mind. Not so with the Lord of the domain. His heavy mood deepened from day to day, and there were rumours abroad in the castle and its district, that he had even more than once raised his hand against his wife. If it were so, with true womanly care for her husband's good name, she never spoke of it, even to Edith, who, spite of Lord Foraymore's dark looks and broad spoken hints, persisted in

remaining an intruder on his hospitality solely to cherish and cheer Madelaine. The characters of the sisters appeared to have changed; Madelaine was now fearful and timid, Edith bold and self-reliant.

One day Lord Foraymore having departed with his gun on his shoulder, and his dirk and pistols in his belt, his lady, being alone with her infant son, fell into a deep train of musing. She could not but regard the vision of the Witherleigh oak as an unlucky omen, and she pondered deeply on the probability of a supernatural appearance having really occurred. She had been anything but happy in her married life, and had nothing to recompense her but the deep love for her child. Musing on the strange event of her girlish days, she could not resist the impulse of opening a private drawer in an oaken bureau which stood in her chamber. In this drawer, which she always kept locked, had she ever since her marriage concealed the fatal token of that Hallow'een mystery. The handkerchief itself, which she had often secretly examined, was embroidered in a peculiar fashion with rich colours. It was evidently of foreign work, bearing neither cipher nor crest, and the blood which had saturated the greater portion of the white silk was vivid still in its crimson hue. "Could it," thought Madelaine, as she gazed on it with fresh wonder and horror—"could it be meant as a foreshowing of how this

poor heart should be made to bleed by coldness and scorned love? Oh! why did I tempt the powers of evil?" The unhappy wife might have mused further, but that she became suddenly aware that her husband was before her,—yes, there he stood with the livid hue, the staring eye-balls and clasped hands of the spectre. Madelaine uttered a cry of alarm as the furious man with one hand seized the kerchief lying on her knee, and with the other hand griped her slender throat. She struggled, and implored his mercy. She was no stranger, alas! to these sudden bursts of rage, but she had never seen him thus. In her terror, she believed the demon she invoked on Hallow'een stood before her.

"You—you were the witness then," he exclaimed, "to that deed of horror! I know you now. You found the evidence that alone could have betrayed me, and you have kept it to betray and hang your husband, the father of your child!" Madelaine was too much stricken with terror to reply, even when his hold on her throat relaxed. "You," he repeated furiously, "are the one who can reveal the accursed crime that haunts my brain—that poisons every moment of existence. Nay, deny it not"—seizing again her breathless form. "You know that I, George Foraymore, am a fratricide! You saw the deed done, you stood there masquerading in white clothes and outstretched arms, till I, believing it was my mother's

spirit rising in vengeance for the blood of her first-born, quailed like a coward, and casting away this terrible evidence of my guilt, fled like a scared hound! This was why you screamed and fell at the first sight of me; why not then, before my kinsmen and the assembled neighbours, have proclaimed that I was my brother's murderer?" He laughed in bitter mockery, while she could only murmur unintelligible words. She knew now she had seen no vision on that dreadful night, only a guilty terror-stricken man.

He grew more furious as he witnessed her fear increase, and all this time his unconscious child was playing about the floor, oblivious of the dreadful scene about to be enacted. "Yes," he said,—"stung with poverty, and my brother's hard-heartedness, I came back to Scotland secretly, and tempted him to that spot, alone and at midnight. I struck his death-blow, and threw him into the torrent; I rushed away, and beheld, as I thought, a supernatural witness of my crime. You were that witness, but——my own wife shall never betray me to the gallows—one more murder shall save me!" He drew his dirk as he spoke, and stabbing his nearly senseless wife more than once, threw her from him and fled unperceived from the castle.

Lady Madelaine was found some time after, senseless from the wounds she had received. The terrible affair was "hushed up," but for weeks her

life was despaired of.—As for Lord Foraymore he had disappeared, and for five years his family heard no more of him. At the end of that time a letter was delivered to Earl Morseheath from the Superior of a convent abroad, acquainting him with the death and confession of George Lord Foraymore, who had entered the fraternity as Brother Jaspar.

Many years afterwards, in the early spring, a travelling carriage entered the domains of Foraymore, the occupants of which appeared to meet a warm welcome from the assembled neighbourhood and tenantry. When it reached the house, a young man of tall and well-knit form, with noble features, somewhat embrowned by travel, alighted, and assisted a middle-aged lady of stately presence to descend. Although her hair was silvered, and her dark eye glowed with less fire than of yore, and wrinkles of care furrowed her delicate face, the Lady Foraymore—for she it was—had only just entered the prime of matronhood. She looked at least ten years older than her real age, which not much exceeded forty years. After her, the young man handed out with the same affectionate care another lady, the gentle Edith. Lady Edith, heart-stricken at her sister's sufferings, had steadfastly declined all offers of marriage, and signified her intention of devoting herself to her sister, and that sister's

child. After the death of the Earl and Countess of Morseheath, the sisters taking the young heir with them had set forth on foreign travels. They now returned to celebrate the twenty-first birth-day of the young Lord of Foraymore, and great were the rejoicings in his ancestral domains.

Young Foraymore knew little of his father's dark and fearful history, being too young at the time to remember the last dreadful scene before his parents' parting. He believed, indeed, that his mother had suffered from his father's disappearance and subsequent death in a foreign land; but he knew not that one reason for their long sojourn and wanderings abroad had been to divert her memory from events which, if dwelt on, would in all probability have bereft her of reason. He was full of the life and hope of youth; and as none but the family knew of its last lord's fratricide, none could reflect on him for his father's foul deeds.

And once more, for the first time since Lady Madelaine's own marriage festivities, did the piper play in the halls of Foraymore, and the lords and gentry of the country drank deep draughts to the happiness of the youthful heir. The young people were merrily dancing on the greensward — for the weather was mild and genial—when an old and feeble man was seen slowly approaching the festive throng. The ladies, Lord Foraymore's mother and her sister

Edith, were at an oriol window on the ground-floor, with other elders of the party, watching the spirited pastimes. The wretched beggar—for such his garb denoted him—got past the dancers, and those who were hurrying to and fro with refreshments; and then, as if his strength had utterly failed at this crisis, sank down exhausted. Lady Foraymore, who had watched him, rose hastily, and calling an attendant, desired him to assist the unfortunate person. The dancers stopped, the poor creature was lifted up, carried into the house, and laid on a bed belonging to one of the servants, when it became evident that he was perishing from illness and starvation. His face was emaciated and wan with the fast approaching hues of death; but after he had been revived by cordials, he implored, before he died, to have some converse alone with Lady Foraymore.

The lady willingly went back with the servant. She approached the pallet, and bending over the poor dying man, asked gently what she could do for him. He murmured some unintelligible words, and as she leaned closer to catch what he said, a voice met her ear remembered too vividly for twenty long years. Madelaine started in terror —"Oh, mercy!" she exclaimed, "is the dead sent back?"

"Not so," sadly uttered the stranger. "I have prayed for death—sought for death, implored

it as a boon from Heaven, but it would not come. I have travelled over sea and earth, Madelaine, to expiate my crimes at your tomb. I lay for dead forty-eight hours in the convent of the Sicilians, from whence I afterwards learned the Superior had sent to Scotland the news of my death. I prayed him to let the matter rest, that the lands of Foraymore might be my son's, trusting he might never know his father's blood-stained deeds."

He sank back exhausted. Lady Foraymore, tenderly wiping his brow, damp with approaching death, assured him of her forgiveness, and desired an attendant to summon her son. It was a shadow, indeed, on that bright day to be fated to receive a guilty father's blessing; but Lord Foraymore had whispered he could not die till he had bestowed it; and the young man, wondering and anxious, came instantly.

It was while sounds of festive mirth rang through the castle—for it was impossible and impolitic to dismiss abruptly the tenantry and revellers—that Lord Foraymore, gaining by frequent sustenance the power of speech, reiterated his confession of his brother's murder, and the attempt on the life of his wife. He was soothed and supported until his last moment by his son's and wife's attentions and prayers. The strange circumstances were not revealed by the family; and quietly at dead of night the poor penitent was buried in the grave of his fathers — his

demise and return known only to a few faithful retainers.

Lady Madelaine and Lady Edith lived to extreme age, and it was particularly observed that when Madelaine's grand-children gathered round her to hear the legendary tales which she was fond of relating, she never failed to warn them of the sin and danger of trying forbidden spells on Hallow'een.—Now, little Mary, put down the pen, and remember that you always pray to be content with the present, and never foolishly seek to pry into the future, for no good will ever come of it.

The Discontented Milliner.

Among the girls in our work-room was one who had become, from her agreeable appearance and gay temper, an especial favourite. She possessed, too, one of those strange fanciful names which were so much used among the poets of that age, Cynthia—Cynthia Lovett. She was by no means usually cold and variable like the moon her namesake; on the contrary, she was generally warm-hearted, pleasant in her bearing, and kind in her manner. We thought none the worse of our pretty work-woman either, because at twenty-one—being then out of her apprenticeship—she became engaged to Matthew Graham, a young carpenter, set up on his own account, a thing which, when she married, Cynthia intended to do for herself, in the dress-making and millinery line. We felt we should be sorry enough to part with the girl; she had most unusual taste in the business, and indeed so reliable was she, and so genteel in her manners, that when Christiana Marcourt or myself were busy, and afraid to

trust the "hands" by themselves, we often sent Cynthia to wait on our customers, knowing she could take orders as well as ourselves. She liked that part of her duty well enough—too well it turned out after.

Among the ladies Cynthia waited on most frequently, was a young lady of quality who had been from her birth uncontrolled, an orphan, a beauty, and a great heiress—four circumstances in life likely to exercise some influence on a girl's mind. Whatever put it into Cynthia's head to begin wishing that she was like Miss Belinda Beechthorne—as rich, beautiful, free, and powerful—we could never imagine; certain it is, that after a few weeks' attendance on the heiress, a change came over the spirit of our pet workwoman, anything but gratifying to those who wished her well.

The wealthy young lady who excited such a spirit of discontent in the hitherto cheerful girl had reached her twenty-fifth year, and was tired of her money, her pleasures, her vanities, and even her own beauty. She possessed an indolent, Oriental kind of temperament; and having been left at an early age with only a guardian who lived abroad, she, under the sway of a governess nearly as indolent as herself, who now resided with her as a companion, did exactly as she liked, and learnt only as much as she chose. Still Belinda Beechthorne possessed talents which,

under careful tuition, might have rendered her a remarkable woman. At this period of her life, if she did no positive harm in society, she did no actual good, and, if sins of omission are as heinous as more active ones, ran a fair chance of having a heavy account to render.

Miss Beechthorne would have given a handsome sum for a new sensation. As for wooers, she was fairly sick of them. She had tried falling desperately in love, but had fallen out of it again just as quickly; and even witnessed, unmoved, her quondam lover's addresses to a lady of her acquaintance, and their subsequent marriage, at which she was principal bridesmaid. I believe she cherished an idea that she was sought only for her great wealth, for she had inherited from her father three hundred thousand pounds—and how to disburse such a sum, beyond a certain state and extravagance, she had not a notion. I do not think it ever entered her mind that there were in the world people who were poor and starving: how could she, who had a new robe for every day? To be sure, "Henry Earl of Moreland," a novel illustrating the pleasures of benevolence, was fashionable reading just then; but she considered such descriptions as it contained to be only the exaggeration of fiction.

It was while attending on this wearied beauty that our Cynthia, instead of pitying the fine lady, and rejoicing in her own life of simple and honest

labour, thought proper to be smitten with a desire to become possessed of that which to Miss Beechthorne made life so utterly valueless. The girl became gloomy, the fresh colour faded from her cheek, her face seldom wore a smile, and she was less and less diligent day by day. We made up our minds that Cynthia was ill. Of course our first duty was to question her, and our next, as we could get no explanation, to remonstrate. We gradually elicited the truth, that Cynthia Lovett was pining with grief because she was a poor work-girl, and not a great lady like Miss Belinda Beechthorne. I was greatly shocked at this confession of weakness, and as for Christiana Marcourt, she fairly began to scold.

"I can't help it, Mistress Taffetas," the girl sobbed; "see how I slave every day, all the year round; and to see that beautiful young lady with everything about her so grand, and yet not care about anything, it—it's too much."

I was out of patience with the girl's unaccountable folly. "Surely, child," I said, "you must have lost your wits, if indeed you ever possessed any. Have you not health?—a fair enough face, and plenty of work? Do you not earn a respectable livelihood? Above all, do you not know how great is the sin of envy?"

"I know all that, Madam," she replied sullenly, "but still I wish I was a lady."

"And pray," said my forewoman, provoked

beyond endurance—"pray what is to become of Matthew? for I suppose my would-be fine lady begins to disdain a poor carpenter." The girl's face flushed—Christiana's thrust had hit the mark.

"Matthew may seek whom he pleases," she said; and left the room with such an air, that for our lives we could not help laughing.

That very hour came a message from Miss Belinda Beechthorne that she needed a fresh suit, and that Cynthia Lovett was to wait upon her. We would have fain gainsayed this request of the young lady's, but she was too good a customer to be contradicted; besides, there was small chance, we believed, of Cynthia's being any nearer her wish by going to Miss Beechthorne's, and therefore we did not interfere further than to intimate to the perverse girl, that if she persisted in her negligence we should no longer give her employment.

If we were annoyed by Cynthia's folly, Cynthia, on her part, was not less indignant at our attempts to control her ambitious thoughts. Having no father or mother, the girl had been brought up by her grandmother, who now had no dependence save on Cynthia's earnings. Perhaps it was partly the privations which the charge of her aged relative entailed on Cynthia that made the girl sigh for liberty and wealth. Granny Lovett was herself one of the most discontented of old dames, and never satisfied with any exertion

made in her behalf. In such a frame of mind, Cynthia started for the grand mansion of Miss Beechthorne, which overlooked the Park. She met on her way Matthew Graham, and behaved to him in such a haughty manner, that the young man parted from her abruptly; and in by no means a better temper for this accidental interview, she knocked at Miss Beechthorne's door, was admitted by the supercilious butler, and desired to go to Miss Beechthorne in the back drawing-room.

The young lady was there with her companion. She was even more listless than ever; the morbid surfeit which almost invariably attends a plethora of wealth had attacked Belinda Beechthorne, and deadened every sense of enjoyment. Yet this very morning, for the first time, Miss Beechthorne had been induced to think that perhaps, after all, life had some other purpose than to dress, to dance, to ride about, to shop, and to feel bored with everybody and everything. She had taken up, in sheer vacuity, the fourth volume of the Spectator, and found there the description of the characters of Emilia and Honoria. Conscience, which was by no means dull in this lady, whispered, indeed, that she bore a greater resemblance to the faulty Honoria, than to the almost perfect Emilia. To divert her thoughts, she exchanged the volume for a "Guardian," and as soon as she opened the book read this passage:—

"There is hardly a spirit on earth so mean "and contracted as to centre all regards on its "own interests, exclusive of the rest of mankind. "Even the selfish man hath some share of love, "which he bestows on his family and friends. "A nobler mind hath at heart the common "interest of the society or country of which he "makes a part. And there is still a more diffu- "sive spirit, whose being or intentions reach "the whole mass of mankind, and are continued "beyond the present age to a succession of future "generations."

She read on, and became deeply impressed by the enlarged tone of benevolence pervading the essay. The elegant and agreeable writer treated the subject of Christian charity in its finest and broadest sense, and the glowing language touched Belinda's feelings with acute intensity. It is wonderful how frequently a short paragraph, a few printed words, will influence a character for life; and I often think what a great responsibility rests with those who have the gift of making books bestowed on them, what a deal they must have to answer for who pour out frivolous and immoral trash to pollute the young and thoughtless. But, as I was saying, Miss Beechthorne was reflecting on what she had just perused, and comparing its elevating sentiment with her own discontent and frivolity, when Cynthia was ushered into her presence. Never, perhaps, had these two

young women regarded each other with deeper interest than at this moment, when the mind of one was irritated with foolish ambition and envy; and that of the other, just awakening to a knowledge of the deep and solemn truth—that not for ourselves alone are we created. Belinda had fancied that she detested every species of selfishness, but was now beginning to suspect that this vice (the worst the human breast can shelter) had considerable place in her heart. Cynthia's recent feeling of discontent was just then more powerful than ever; she regarded the young lady with a gaze curiously compounded of envy, admiration, and reverence. Raising her eyes, Belinda perceived those of the young girl fascinated, as it were. She smiled.

"This poor girl," she said to herself, "regards me, I perceive, as the greatest and happiest of beings;—would we could change lots! Why not?" the thought came rapidly over her. "At least, why not make a trial of each other's condition, just to see how we should mutually behave? If I had any real notion of what poverty is, I should better know how to proceed: it might benefit me to be hungry, and compelled to work for my food,—to have something to do that *must* be done."

"Are you very poor?" she said abruptly, and aloud to the young woman. Cynthia coloured—she had been contrasting her own humble dress with the exquisite robe which formed Miss Beech-

thorne's toilette, and was saying secretly that her hands were quite as white as those on which gleamed clustering and precious rings.

"Very, Madam," was the mortified reply. She thought Belinda was jesting.

"Would you not like to be as rich as I am?"

"Oh, Madam, I should indeed, were it but possible."

"It is quite so," said Miss Beechthorne coolly; "that is, for a short time. You may think it very strange, but I want to know what it is to be poor, to work for one's own living; I want to feel for others, I mean,—I cannot, until I know what they endure, how they live, how they die, how best they can be relieved. What can rich people know of these things, but what they are told? I wish to learn from the true teacher—experience."

Cynthia stared; she could understand people wanting to be rich, but not their desire to feel poverty. "You, Madam? Impossible!"

"And why?—it is not so difficult as you suppose. Listen:—for three months we will exchange stations; I will be the work-woman, you the heiress. At the end of that period, if you still wish to be an idler, I will allow you an annuity sufficient, at least, to preclude the necessity of working, on the condition that you live single, and never do anything to earn money."

"But how, Madam?" Cynthia was bewildered.

Then came a sudden thought: "I have a grandmother," she said; "she is very old, and cross, and ailing;—no! I cannot leave her." Better feelings than self claimed the young girl now.

"I will take care of her," Miss Beechthorne answered.

"You, Madam? Oh no, you do not know the things poor people have to do. I have to wait on grandmother myself, and to work beside."

"No matter, I will learn all this. Who attends on her, then, when you are away?"

"A little girl, the daughter of a neighbour, one who is much poorer even than ourselves; and grandmother is *so* cross, enough to fret life itself out sometimes; you could not bear it a day, I am sure."

But each suggested difficulty only added new zest to Miss Beechthorne's project. She overruled them all, and showing Cynthia some embroidery work near her, on a small, costly worktable, asked if she thought she could earn enough to support two persons by such work.

The young girl rapturously admired it; she had never, she remarked, seen finer, even at Mistress Taffetas's house, where so much was done.

"But," said Miss Beechthorne, "I cannot apply for work there; is there no other house you can direct me to?"

"Oh yes, there is Madame la Marchant; she

always gives out plenty, for embroidery is so much needed."

"That difficulty, then, is settled; I feared that I knew nothing useful enough to earn my bread by. Wait a moment, I must consider how best to proceed."

There was one person present who had heard this conversation with unfeigned amazement, and whose rational conclusion was, that Miss Belinda Beechthorne was suddenly attacked with insanity. This person was Mistress Meritall, the companion who had resided with Miss Beechthorne from infancy, and who of course regarded such a scheme as the height of folly. She knew the young lady's mind too well, however, to venture on any remonstrance until she was called on for her opinion; and her suspense was soon relieved by Belinda saying—

"Meritall, how am I to conduct this matter?"

Then the sentiments of the confidential friend poured forth, and requesting the favour of Miss Beechthorne's presence in another apartment, she abruptly strove to solve the curious problem, by playfully asking the young lady if she had gone mad.

"Not that I am aware of," was the light answer. "How do people feel when they are mad, Merry?" That was her pet name for the lady friend.

"Hot in the head."

"I am quite cool. I will tell you what put this scheme into my brain. I have been reading Shakspeare—Christopher Sly, you know. Nay, never scold; did not you give me a taste for the Bard yourself? Well now, hush! I want novelty—to be poor and work for my bread will be the greatest I can hit upon. Now give me a kiss, and don't be cross. Don't you remember our bargain when I was twenty-one? You were never to leave me; but I was always to have my own way. Come, come! just prepare for the work you'll have in training Miss Cynthia Lovett into good behaviour: she must go everywhere, mind, that I go to—except indeed to Court. Ha! ha! why, 'twill make you, Merry, quite young again." She threw her arms round Mistress Meritall's neck, kissing her; and that lady, on whom a hint, however playfully administered, was never thrown away, wisely considering that her valuable situation was not to be risked by contradicting Miss Beechthorne's caprice, succumbed without any more forcible demonstration of disapproval than a shrug of her shoulders.

For that day, the wondering and doubtful Cynthia was dismissed; and Miss Beechthorne, with great ardour, commenced preparations for what she termed her ordeal.

There was a great deal to be done before this transmutation took place. Belinda had so to arrange her affairs, that they might be managed without

her interference for the space of three months. Mrs. Meritall had to be lectured and re-lectured, before she could be made thoroughly convinced of the propriety of having a work-girl forced into her society. But Belinda knew that Cynthia would need the guidance of some wiser and older head than her own; and stipulated that Mrs. Meritall should take scrupulous charge of her in every respect.

When all was completed, Cynthia was once more summoned, and the lessons were rehearsed.

Miss Lovett, for so she was to be called, was to be introduced into society as Belinda's cousin from some remote county; and Miss Beechthorne herself volunteered to act for some little time as her pioneer, till Cynthia's confidence should be established, and she might be safely trusted to the guardianship of Mrs. Meritall. Then Belinda meant to retire, on pretext of business, from home, and take shelter under Cynthia's humble roof, obtaining work, and supporting herself and Cynthia's grandmother, for three months. Strange scheme! wild idea! carried out, however, and bearing fruit good and bad, as my reader shall see, who will please to accompany me to the end.

In the presence of Mrs. Meritall, the young women bound themselves by formal agreement to abide by the several conditions of their compact —Cynthia's loss in case of failure, being the life-annuity which Miss Beechthorne purposed settling

on her; Miss Beechthorne's, the forfeiture of a favourite estate.

Cynthia, being duly provided, departed out of the working world, and took up her abode in the patrician sphere at Miss Beechthorne's with great state, supposed to have just arrived from the country. Fine clothes, and a *coiffure* of the last mode, had so altered our milliner, that even the dignified butler treated her with the suavity due to "my lady's cousin." Such the household was given to understand was Miss Lovett's degree, and they never questioned the truth of the assertion.

There was much amusement for Miss Beechthorne in Cynthia's assumption of her new dignities, and her intense relish of those pleasures of fortune which she was capable of appreciating, that is, pleasures of the senses. Belinda's gentle lectures, and her own ready tact, soon put Cynthia at her ease; and at the end of a week, Miss Beechthorne felt she might be trusted under the somewhat unwilling wing of that maternal lady, Mrs. Meritall.

While her own heart beat anxiously, as she prepared to embark on the unknown sea of poverty, old Dame Lovett had been prepared by her grandchild Cynthia for the reception of a stranger and fellow-workwoman, who would supply Cynthia's place while she herself went abroad for improvement in our business. I know not how to defend this fiction on the part of these,

the heroines of my story. Certain it is, that the truth could not have been very safely entrusted to the keeping of Dame Lovett. I can only say that my business is to relate the bare facts, not to extenuate or excuse them.

When Belinda arrived with a box, carried by a porter, she found Mistress Lovett grumbling and scolding enough to rival Xantippe herself. Old age, venerated and respected in its mild and benevolent developments, becomes repulsive when querulous and selfish. Mrs. Lovett was one of those who believed that the fact of having lived to be eighty years old gave her a claim to the forbearance and sympathy of every one. Cynthia was much too light-hearted and careless to sympathize greatly with her grand-dame's real or imaginary grievances. That Goody Lovett had clothes to wear, enough to eat and drink, and her pipe of tobacco and pouch of snuff, was all that troubled the young girl; but of soothing she had little idea. Mrs. Lovett's present grievance, one indeed not much to be wondered at, was Cynthia's absence, and as her guest modestly entered, she commenced scolding. "And what has brought you here?" asked Mistress Lovett.

Belinda might have replied, the gratification of her own strange whims and fancies; but she put the reins on her thought, and said only, "I have come to attend to you, and to take Cynthia's work till she returns."

"What business had she to go away?" demanded the old woman. "And why didn't you come before?—there's nobody to do a thing—nobody to——"

"What can I do?" said Belinda, anxious at once to enter on her new duties. "What shall I get you?"

"Marry, come up, my fine lady! for you look like one, more than a hard-working body. Why, light the fire—don't you see it's gone clean out? Make me a cup of tea—strong, mind; and then I'll tell ye what I think of ye."

With this flattering prospect of reward, Belinda prepared to do the good woman's behests. Alas! her very first movement convinced the experienced spectacles of Mistress Lovett, that her new helping hand knew nothing whatever of the operation called "lighting a fire." Stigmatizing her as "a careless hussy," she deigned to convey her instructions in no measured tones or epithets, and Miss Beechthorne at length achieved the desired result. The tea brewage fared better,—indeed so well, that Mrs. Lovett declared, with unwilling satisfaction, that she had not tasted such a cup of tea for years. "Not since my poor man was second mate of the John Lorry Chinaman," she said. "But goodsake! let us see the caddie. Ye may well make good tea," she said with a grimace, as Belinda fetched the old woman the caddie—"you'll ruin us all in a week, if you make

tea that fashion. There, take it away; I hate waste—save the leaves, and boil them for your own breakfast." Poor Miss Beechthorne had totally overlooked that first virtue of the poor—economy. "I shall do better another time," she said, smiling: "don't be angry, dame; for, to say the truth, I am not much used to housekeeping matters—but I am willing to learn, and you shall teach me." She dusted and tidied the room after that little speech—brought the old woman's pipe, and made herself as useful as she could in the small household matters.

Brave Belinda! she set to her work as work should be always done—in earnest. After that, supper was to be got—being, happily for Miss Beechthorne, ready-cooked meat: the old woman was then assisted to bed in the adjoining room, where her snoring soon gave happy evidence that, for the night at least, her selfish wailings and requirements were over. Thoroughly fatigued, Miss Beechthorne sat by the dying embers of the fire, and thought. "This is all tiresome enough," she reflected, "but nothing worthy to be called trial or affliction. I wonder how Cynthia gets on; to-night—let me see—yes, to-night is Lady Cheshire's grand party—and they have cards, I know. Well, I am very tired—I suppose in that corner is my bed—and, bless me! before I lie down in it, I have to make it." She rose to do so, when she heard some one at the door.

At first Belinda was about to call a servant; but recollecting herself, she rose up, and opening the door, admitted the new comer. It was a young man of about her own age, well-favoured, manly, and altogether looking above his condition, which was evidently that of a workman. He took off his cap with a deferential air to Miss Beechthorne, though her camblet dress, thick cap, and apron bespoke outwardly that she was only of his own degree. "I want to see Cynthia," he said. Why did the blood rush up to Belinda's face as the young man uttered these simple words? She concluded, rightly enough, that this was Cynthia's once accepted, now half discarded suitor. Why did his eyes express such unmistakeable, yet respectful admiration? If there be not positive love at first sight, yet unquestionably there are sudden sympathies, as well as antipathies. Something of this nature was at work. And yet what could there be in common with a carpenter and Miss Beechthorne? Had she then adopted the tastes of her new condition as readily as she conformed to their usages? Assuredly not. She blushed, I say, deeply—I suppose, partly because she was again compelled to rehearse a—well, fiction—let us be polite; and there is no greater sign of good breeding in this world, than calling bad things by smooth names.

She repeated the plot of the drama which instinctively she felt to be thickening fast around

her. "Cynthia gone abroad," said the young man in utter amazement,—"and not tell me of the intention?" He forgot the doctrine of sympathies and attractions in the rudeness of that cruel surprise. Perhaps the affection was weaker, but the time had been when Matthew Graham loved Cynthia Lovett very dearly.

He stood there in silence for some minutes. "How unkind!" he murmured. Belinda's conscience smote her. Conscience had been inconveniently busy of late—was it not at its dictates she was here now! and for what?—She had, perhaps, separated two fond hearts. Faint visions came of the time when she had in very idleness fancied herself in love. "I am very sorry," she began. He interrupted her—"Don't say that"—with the excusable gallantry of a man who had no reason to think himself an ugly or a disagreeable fellow—"I am rewarded for my trouble in coming here to-night, had it even been twice as far, by seeing you." He would have taken her hand—but the pride of the great lady awoke—she drew back. He was a little offended, but tried to laugh it off. "Well, well!" he said, "I meant no harm—don't take offence, or I shan't come again. But who are you? I never saw you before."

She explained, introducing herself as a friend of Cynthia's.

"She never told me," he said, "that she had so pretty a friend. Good-bye,—I shall call

again just to hear how she goes on;—more than she deserves, though. Well! she seems to have forgotten me; perhaps I may learn to forget too. Won't you shake hands?"—and one of her small hands was in his broad palm, before she knew it. Matthew lingered and lingered, but at length took his departure—and then Miss Beechthorne, wearied and oppressed, lay down to rest on her hard but cleanly couch.

She was roused up at day-break by the old dame's clamorous cry for a cup of tea. Profiting by her last night's experience, she avoided former faults, and then dressing Mrs. Lovett, told her she had to seek for work—and went out to find the establishment of Madame la Marchant.

Hand embroidery in coloured silks was a profitable source of women's employment in those times. Gentlemen's coats, vests, and even stockings were covered with it. Belinda had no difficulty in obtaining work, on showing a sample of her own; but when she returned home, she found great difficulty in pursuing her occupation peaceably: Dame Lovett's requirements were legion, her complaints wearisome and continual, and Miss Beechthorne soon found that her earnings would barely suffice to meet all the requirements of her new station. Her agreement had effectually prevented her from retaining any money, and when the supply of food and other necessaries which she had commissioned Cynthia to procure was finished,

Miss Beechthorne felt real anxiety in providing for their daily wants. She worked well, yet extremely slow, and had to bear her employers' complaints of the small quantity furnished by her hands, though they confessed that the quality of the work was not to be disputed. Perhaps—I only hazard this opinion—her labour would have been intolerable, but for the now nightly recurring visits of Matthew Graham. He came usually on the plea of bringing the Granny snuff, or tobacco, or some little matter that he knew would please the old woman; and she, really partial to him, and vexed with Cynthia's neglect, encouraged his visits.

Graham had acquired habits and manners beyond his class. His father, at one time a respectable London shopkeeper, had fallen into decay, but not till his son had received at least a decent education, and was apprenticed to a carpenter. He loved work, was punctual and steady, and likely to do well.

He used to detail his simple history bit by bit, of an evening, while Miss Beechthorne toiled over her frame and silks. When Dame Lovett, exhausted with her grievances, had fallen asleep, the conversation grew more interesting, and Matthew could seldom be convinced that the hour was late.

"Cynthia never made the time pass so quick," he said one night, to the great dismay of Miss Beech-

thorne. "Do you know, Mistress Jenny"—her assumed name—"I begin to think we both made a mistake—do you not think so?" She would not listen, but rose, and saying she was no judge of such matters, wished him good night. Granny was observant of affairs, being neither deaf nor blind. "Matthew is changing his mind, I doubt," the old lady said one night as Belinda assisted her to bed; "and serve her right, I say—serve her right." Miss Beechthorne affected not to notice this sharp look out of the old woman's; but she had unwillingly enough arrived at the same conclusion herself. It would have been curious to have known the reason why her head ran so much, when over her work, upon unequal marriages. It could not have been that she was enamoured of her new mode of existence. I declare, in all sincerity, it had no charms at all for her. She disliked the drudgery to which she was subjected. But Belinda Beechthorne had a naturally firm mind, and there was no fear that her steps would be retraced. "I shall know now how to relieve rightly," she would say. She bore every privation willingly, that the old woman might not suffer through her strange whim. Perhaps she often repented of the strictness of her vow, but there was no recanting.

Nearly two months thus had passed away, when an event which might have been calculated on, but apparently had not, befell Belinda:

Granny's ailments centred in one final disease, one for which there is no cure—death. It came suddenly—a cough, a gasp, and all was over. Helpless and unversed in those sad details which surround the death-beds of the poor, this blow completely unnerved Belinda. It occurred at a moment when having a supply of work nearly but not quite complete, she was without money. She applied to the La Marchants, but they were inexorable in their rule of never paying beforehand. Fettered by her compact, she must have been shipwrecked, had it not been for Matthew Graham's timely and proffered assistance. He lent her a sum—he would have given it, but, with a vehemence he had never seen in her before, she forbade such a thing to be even named. "It shall be returned," she said earnestly, "with rich interest." He stared at first, but soon evidently applying her words in a sense widely different to their real meaning, pressed her offered hand to his honest lips. She shrank back. He was off his guard, and the passion which had been smouldering in his heart for some time now blazed forth. He told her that she was his light and hope in this world;—that he was but a poor rude fellow, to love so much grace and beauty;—that it was not those things either which had made him, spite of himself, love her; that it was her sweet temper which first won his heart—"a heart," he said, "which had been rejected as some-

thing too trifling to care for by Cynthia, but which nevertheless was the heart of a man, fond and true." He said all this as rapidly as the words could be poured from his lips, and then—he waited her reply.

Heaven knows what kind of one he had anticipated. He was ill prepared for the blanched cheek, the quivering lip, the hysterical tears, which marked the form before him. He implored but a few words; he had them—they were, "Go! go! never, never see me more."

He was struck, as by some hand that dealt a fatal blow. There was no sign of coquetry, of relenting, of shy coyness that needed only entreaty to yield to its own wishes. He saw the doom was irrevocable—he seized his hat, and departed: at the threshold he was called back, a low faint voice stayed him. He came;—amazement! her hands for one moment seized both his—deep sobs were breathed on his breast, a head for one minute only rested there. Again the low soft voice came—but with what words! It said—"Hear this, the sacrifice of pride, which one day you may perhaps estimate at its full value; hear me tell you—for so much does your honest love deserve from me,—that of all men I ever saw, or who ever addressed words of love to me—of all men who ever may—I can regard with favour but you only. I may not love *you*—I will never love another! Bear with you this assurance—oh, deep and true

heart! honest as the rough hand which thus, thus I press—and so, adieu for ever!" She was gone before he recovered from his amazement, but he knew with sure instinct how unavailing was hope; and after a brief struggle, he went too.

I will now, with my reader's permission, take a survey of Miss Cynthia Lovett in her grand mansion—heedless alike of lover, grand-dame, or indeed aught but that stream of pleasure in which she now bathed to the very lips. The only sigh of regret she ever felt was when she dwelt on the painful idea that the time passed too rapidly. Mrs. Meritall and she did not by any means agree; they might have been not inaptly compared to a skittish colt and an obstinate mule yoked together. It is astonishing how soon the young girl fell into the worst habits of a woman of fashion. At first, indeed, Miss Beechthorne's "Country Cousin" was all the rage, for novelty is ever precious to the great world; but very soon her insipidity and ignorance wearied more than her blunders amused. Several admirers who attended in her suite at first gradually fell off, and she had but one constant suitor, an old nobleman, who was known to be a mere fortune hunter. Cynthia's youth, and a large reputed property which Mrs. Meritall thought proper to add in

her genealogical history of Miss Lovett, had attracted this man to woo her, thereby adding the fierce sting of a woman's jealousy to Mrs. Meritall's previous disgust and contempt. That lady had indeed formed the ambitious scheme of ending her chaperonage as the Countess of Woodly, a scheme which Miss Lovett's appearance on the scene threatened seriously to counteract. Cynthia gave much encouragement to the old lord; she thought a title and an Earl's coronet would be better than the honest hand of Matthew Graham. The girl had become totally unfitted to return to a life of honest labour, and not merely unfitted, but unwilling. She began already, with a title and fortune in perspective, to despise the annuity, the promise of which induced her to enter so readily into Miss Beechthorne's wild scheme. Poor mistaken Cynthia! —had she known the charms she thought so powerful were nothing in the eyes of Lord Woodly compared to the dowry of broad lands he believed her to possess, how differently would she have acted! As it was, she dressed, danced, yawned, flirted, talked a quantity of silly nonsense, and played at faro, with all the presumption of confident vanity.

At length my Lord Woodly, fearful of losing the prize, determined to secure it by an offer of his hand and heart. Unluckily for Miss Lovett's future prospects, he selected for adviser and con-

fidante—quite unaware of that lady's own designs —no less a person than Mrs. Meritall.

He opened the game cautiously, one afternoon, by asking that lady if she did not think "Miss Lovett a charming creature?" Mrs. Meritall gave a kind of indefinite nod, that, like Lord Burleigh's, might mean nothing, or a good deal. My Lord proceeded: "My dear friend, I have had the happiness of knowing the remarkable qualities of your head and heart a long time—I am about to speak in confidence to you. I need your advice."

"Mine, such as it is," she replied, "is ever at your service. On what subject, may I ask?"

"Love and marriage," he replied, with a look intended to be fascinating.

The lady simpered; a fond thought intruded, that her own aims had been successful. Alas for her, a truer archer had hit that commodity which his Lordship termed his heart.

"Yes! my dear Madam, and doubtless you guess the object. Can you indeed doubt, having witnessed my devotion? I think you once told me Miss Lovett—ah! the divine Cynthia—charming name—had a large property?"

"May I venture to inquire what Miss Lovett's property has to do with the matter in question?"

"Much—much; you see it is very well for giddy youth to scorn a question of the purse, but you and I, dear Madam, know how essential it is to wedded happiness. Now my estate is not a large

one, considering my rank; and if the lovely Cynthia were unendowed, why——"

"I am, then, to understand it is to Miss Lovett your Lordship means to propose."

"Unquestionably! To whom else did Mrs. Meritall suppose?"

Mrs. Meritall's lips became slightly compressed. But the lady's resolution was prompt.

"If your Lordship supposes Miss Lovett to possess property, I can only grieve over so unaccountable a mistake. She has not, to my certain knowledge, a penny of her own, except what she earns by her trade of millinery."

"How!"

Twenty notes of admiration could not express the degree of surprise contained in that monosyllable. Half the secret had been revealed in a moment of uncontrollable rage—the other half was not worth keeping. Besides, it might turn the scale. The chairs were drawn closer together, and in half an hour afterwards my Lord Woodly was in possession of the whole story, and congratulating himself on his narrow escape.

"A little jade," he said to himself as he sauntered through the Park, and gaily kissed his hand to Cynthia who was braving it among the titled mob, like the best. "I'll turn the tables, though. Plots, eh?—excellent. Now, Mesdames Beechthorne and Lovett, we'll see if only fine ladies and milliners' girls can plot."

That very evening, at a party of Cynthia's, my Lord Woodly begged to introduce his nephew, my Lord Evergreen, to Miss Lovett's especial notice. He said this to Cynthia with quite a fatherly air, adding in a whisper, that Tom was an excellent match, and if he married to his mind—he knew where—he, Lord Woodly, should leave him all he possessed.

Cynthia's ears opened very wide to this intelligence. A young lord—a good-looking lord! How much better would that be than an old tiresome man like my Lord Woodly! And there was no mistake about the matter. This young lord, with his silly flattery and attention, interested her deeply, and his uncle encouraged the project of matrimony with animated earnestness.

By the end of that evening, all parties being so agreeable, matters were further advanced than you could suppose possible: Cynthia, indeed, cared not about delay—the third month was advancing. Young Lord Evergreen made his proposals within a few days, and Cynthia communicated them, with her own acceptance, to Mrs. Meritall.

"My dear, you are the most fortunate of girls," said the wily companion, who I believe knew all about it; for Lord Woodly really had turned his blighted affections that way, the lady having, he understood, no mean sum standing in the funds. "Miss Beechthorne, to be sure, will be highly pleased on her return to find you have been so

prosperous. By the way, I wonder how my dear Belinda fares."

While the courting between Cynthia and the young Lord proceeds, we will glance at the progress of Miss Beechthorne.

"Dear Belinda's" heart was by no means as light as when she first entered her new abode. How could it be, when it felt the weight of another heart attached to its own? She had caused Dame Lovett to be decently interred; and since then had freely visited sad homes of poverty, and seen and heard the things the poor had to contend with. She saw that want of order, economy, and cleanliness made poor people their own worst enemies. She noted down cases of quiet suffering, of patient endurance, and henceforth was but the steward of her own vast wealth. Must she, then, to do good, immolate herself? Was she not wealthy enough for her own happiness, as well as to promote that of others? If she so loved a good and worthy man, what but pride prevented her from bestowing with her hand that wealth? Perfect love crushes pride as effectually as it does fear. Miss Beechthorne's was perfect—perfect in its sincerity and singleness of heart. Not the living, but the dead, stood in Matthew Graham's path of happiness.

On the day of Miss Beechthorne's majority, her father's will was read to her. She perfectly remembered the words of that testament, and

indeed was not very likely to forget them. After the usual preamble, a passage in it ran, that if she married any man not of noble birth and titled rank, she was to be disinherited from all moneys and lands whatsoever; and entailing on her also, in that case, such bitter and unnatural denunciations that Belinda shuddered at the mere thought of incurring them. The words of that testamentary clause became imprinted in letters of fire on the brain of Belinda, after she became acquainted with Matthew Graham. Her vacant heart had found its resting-place, only to know that rest for her was not in this world. But her spirit was a brave one. She looked down unflinchingly into the grave of her dearest hopes, and there beheld her immortality. On the ruins of her happiness she knew was built the welfare, the solace, and the bliss of hundreds; she murmured not, but clasped her hands, looked upwards, and said, "Father, I am here, ready to do the work given unto me." Three months!—three times three years of her old life had not effected what that short discipline had done.

And now the time drew near when her present state of restraint and preliminary endurance would pass away, and she would possess the power as well as the will to do her fellow-creatures good. Of Matthew she had not heard since that eventful night, but she knew from various circumstances that he was at hand. Belinda Beech

thorne was the sole mourner at the humble grave of poor old Dame Lovett, where she caught a glimpse of a black coat near the spot, and believed the identity of the wearer was not doubtful.

But he came no more. It was best that it should be so. Tears it was impossible for her to suppress. We all mourn our nearest and dearest with many sighs and heart-broken sobs, and why not Belinda the man who was dead to her for ever! And yet not for ever: she believed there would be a meeting, from which all sorrow would be for ever banished, all tears dried. Had Miss Beechthorne been educated in the Catholic faith, it is possible she would have given all her possessions to found some religious order. As it was, her destined course was likely to effect much good, to check much evil, which, even in her short experience, had come close to her.

It was very early in the morning of the day following the one terminating the three months' probation assigned by the heiress to herself and Cynthia, that Miss Beechthorne drove up to her own door. Early as it was, however, a bridal equipage had just left the house. The amazed Belinda, questioning her own woman, learnt that Miss Lovett had gone to be married to my Lord Evergreen at St. Jamcs's Church, and that a brave party was invited to the wedding.

Belinda was speechless with consternation. How could she have imagined the girl to be so

ungrateful, so base, to take in a noble family? She desired Mrs. Meritall instantly to be summoned. The woman smiled; she believed Mrs. Meritall would be Lady Woodly by that time.

Miss Beechthorne changed her dress, and awaited the return of the bridal party. It was unpardonable in Mrs. Meritall, she thought, who knew the time fixed for her return. A great crowd was round the door awaiting the arrival of the show. The servants were busy preparing the bridal repast; and Miss Beechthorne, overcome by uneasy thoughts, paced backwards and forwards in the splendid room, which contrasted strangely in her eyes with the poor place she had just quitted.

At last they came. Mrs. Meritall—I ask her pardon, my Lady Woodly—threw her arms round her "dear Belinda's" neck, and kissing her, asked her pardon and congratulations. Cynthia simpered, but looked confused; she feared, indeed, the catastrophe of her own plot was close at hand, but solaced herself with the idea that, being actually married, there was little fear after the first storm of anger from her lord was over.

Miss Beechthorne did not wait very long before she commenced her indignant questioning. She began with my young Lord Evergreen. "Your lordship, I presume," she said in a lofty tone, for she knew her own honour would be compromised in the matter, "is aware of the real degree that your bride has hitherto filled in society."

The bridegroom looked sheepish, but answered nothing. She turned impatiently to Lord Woodly. That nobleman had once professed a profound but unavailing liking for herself, and regarded her now deprecatingly, as if he would have said, "You might have had me yourself, disdainful fair one, had you so pleased it."

"Did *you*, my Lord, know of Lady Evergreen's station and birth?" Poor Cynthia! that title, "Lady Evergreen," sounded splendidly in her ears, and revived her drooping courage. It was the first and last time she heard herself so called.

"I candidly confess, Miss Beechthorne, I did."

"Then, my Lord, happily, I am not responsible for any mistake," said Belinda, ineffably relieved to find this marriage was no fault of hers.

"Assuredly not, Madam," said Lord Woodly, in his driest and most sarcastic tone. "But I had nearly myself been a victim to your unaccountable inclination for imposing people of low degree on society under false pretences."

Miss Beechthorne coloured, her pride being touched. Her nature was, however, too ingenuous not to own the justice of Lord Woodly's remarks; she bowed her head, submitting to the keen rebuke. "But," she said, "your own lady was entrusted with the secret, and doubtless could have forewarned your lordship of the danger you were in."

"It is owing to that circumstance," replied his Lordship, with a self-satisfied glance of mischievous enjoyment, "that I have the regret of informing this lady" (turning to Cynthia) "that instead of her being wedded to my nephew, Lord Evergreen, she has merely married my own valet, John Croft. Amongst so much plotting, I humbly conceive I may be allowed my share of the joke."

Oh! if Hogarth had been there, whose but his matchless pencil could have adequately pourtrayed that scene, or so well depicted the surprise of Belinda, the ill-suppressed triumph of my Lady Woodly, the exulting sneer of her lord, the artful leer of the gentleman's gentleman, the rage, shame, and utter confusion of Cynthia—baffled, outwitted, and alas! irrevocably married!

Miss Beechthorne was the first to break silence. "You are rightly served," she said, "for your bad faith and duplicity; you knew well that to such a height of deceit I never would have been a party. I cannot pity you—but, nevertheless, my own word is my bond. You will still possess the annuity I promised, though one of its conditions be violated, the other I annul of my own accord. Work," she said with emotion, "work to retrieve the past, to amend the future. Look on work as your greatest blessing. I know full well what evils idleness may bring in its train." She turned round to the company, and curtseying by way of dismissal, left the room and retired at

once to her own chamber, there to digest and concoct certain plans which she had laid down for herself. The bridal party rapidly dispersed, no one thinking it proper to stay in a house where it was evident the company were anything but welcome, or expected.

The affair made some noise at the time, especially as my Lord and Lady Woodly spread the story over half the town before their honeymoon was over. But Belinda cared little for the world of fashion now. Her thoughts, indeed, were widely removed from the opinions of those for whom she once cared so much.

She had immediately on her return home sent a confidential servant to the residence of Matthew Graham with the sum he had lent for Mrs. Lovett's funeral. Her messenger returned, and reported that Mr. Graham had taken the money, but without inquiry or message. She had summoned Cynthia to a private interview, in which she told the girl of her grandmother's death, and presented her with a deed of annuity for one hundred a year. More she knew would only tempt to indolence and dissipation. Mr. Croft himself was pleased enough; and Cynthia had to put up with being plain Mistress Croft, instead of my lady. She was sullen and almost reckless: but Belinda thought of her conduct to Graham, and scarcely pitied her.

Belinda gave no more time to idle retrospection. To further Matthew Graham on his road through

life, was her earnest wish. She placed the matter in the hands of her solicitor, who had directions never to let the young man know his benefactress; but before the lawyer could put into practice his directions, Matthew Graham had left England. Years elapsed before Miss Beechthorne ever knew whither he had gone to try to efface the memory of his rash and hopeless attachment. She had no reason to surmise that he ever had a suspicion of her real name and station.

Belinda arranged her affairs and disposed of her town house, matters which the marriage of Mrs. Meritall had made comparatively easy. She then founded a small establishment, chiefly a refuge for her own sex, who were wretched, hopeless, and penitent. In this house was organized a school for nursing the sick, which Belinda meant hereafter to turn to good account. Her life was devoted to the personal superintendence of the good works which her fortune enabled her to achieve.

In the year 1789, all London became excited with the news of the tumults breaking out in Paris. The people had been worked up into actual rebellion by the want of bread, and the French capital was a scene of carnage.

In the winter of 1792-3, a woman closely veiled and wrapped in a large cloak, took her way

through the streets of Paris, a little before midnight. A boy was with her, acting evidently as a guide. He stopped at the door of a rude *cabaret*, or wine shop. "She is here, Madame," he said. The woman—I should say lady, for though her dress was plain and dark, none that saw her could question her degree—giving the boy some money, paused at the threshold. She was about forty years of age, and her face, once possessed of great beauty, was now chiefly remarkable for its expression of patient endurance and tranquillity. Knocking gently, she demanded of the fierce-looking woman who opened the door, if there was in the house a sick Englishwoman? adding that she had been sent for as a countrywoman of the unfortunate person, and had brought her some aid.

"You may go and see," the rough attendant said, somewhat awed by the gentleness of the lady's manner. "The woman is in a chamber on the first floor." And armed with this permission, the English "Lady of Charity" ascended on her errand of mercy.

She found the poor creature, who was in the last exhaustion of decline, stretched on a miserable pallet, moaning hoarsely for drink. From a basket she carried, she took a glass of mild cordial, and held it to the lips of the sufferer, who eagerly imbibed it. When the lady spoke to her in English, she started up at the sound, and burst into tears.

There was a dim oil lamp burning, and by its light, with a thrill of amazement, Belinda Beechthorne recognised the once blooming Cynthia, Mrs. Croft, in that poor dying woman.

She could not avoid pronouncing her name. Indeed, there was no cause for concealment. At first, the sufferer could not recognise Miss Beechthorne, whom she had not seen for many years. Belinda had often inquired after the milliner's welfare, but some stranger received the annuity, which of course always bore her signature to the form of receipt furnished by the lawyer. Cynthia acknowledged that, after her marriage, both herself and husband led a life of idleness, impossible to be supported on one hundred pounds per annum. Croft was fond of gaming, and had actually staked his wife's annuity, though with her own consent, for he said he was sure of winning five thousand pounds. He lost it, however, and Cynthia was compelled to sign the yearly receipts for her own beggary. Her husband had deserted her after that. When she had signed away the last year's annuity, she obtained sufficient money from its receiver to go to Paris, where she hoped to find employment as a milliner, through a former friend of hers in that line. Paris by that time was in a state of anarchy and bloodshed; her friend had disappeared, and Cynthia was penniless and starving. She could ill bear the pressure of distress; she had been well

nigh distracted by it in London, and succumbed to its influence entirely in Paris. She lived a life of reckless dissipation, gradually sinking in the scale of decency, and losing that valuable attribute even in the lowest and poorest—self-respect. Most of her evil associates deserted her, and she existed for some time in a state bordering on desperation. At length a fatal illness attacked her, and she sought shelter in the wretched place in which Miss Beechthorne, who was in Paris on her usual mission of charity, had found her, having been applied to by one of Cynthia's late companions not quite lost to feeling.

Miss Beechthorne heard this recital with the deepest self-upbraiding; she pictured to herself only too well, that had it not been for her selfish romance, the poor creature might have remained happy and contented in her own sphere. Everything was done that humanity could suggest, but in vain—the poor woman expired on the night following Miss Beechthorne's visit.

Belinda thought, as she looked on Cynthia's grave, that she was sorrowing over a victim to her own folly. Miss Beechthorne's piety and benevolence were vigorously exerted to atone for her thoughtless conduct in early life, and she braved the terrors of that awful time—solacing the miserable, feeding the starving, and endeavouring to soften impenitence and presumptuous sin.

She one day followed a cart, in which were

six victims destined for the guillotine. Knowing that there was little chance of her rescuing any from the hands of their excutioners, she might yet relieve them by bearing some last words to survivors, for which favour the unhappy sufferers were often grateful. They were led to the guillotine amid the jeers and taunts of the brutal mob; and as the first was led to his punishment, Belinda, hearing the English accent, looked up, and instantly recognised in the speaker one whom she remembered but too well. She sprang forward,—some trifling delay had occurred, and the executioners were holding parley together,—"Matthew!" she cried—"Matthew Graham!"

He turned. What a face was there! nothing but love itself—undying love—could have recognised it: the hair nearly white—the face withered and ashy pale. This was the termination of a life so sorrowful, that the victim rejoiced rather in his approaching freedom than lamented his fate.

He knew her not for a moment, but recollection came. "Can it be?" he exclaimed,—"to meet thus. One moment—oh, one moment!" he said to the executioners who were hurrying him to meet eternity.

"Ah, Matthew," uttered Belinda, "I have never loved another. Farewell! we meet again—in Heaven."

He was torn from her at this moment: he had just time to pull a packet from his bosom; and

giving it to her, with clasped hands and straining eyes was led to his fate. A few minutes after some of the mob surrounded a woman who had fallen insensible to the earth. The wretches about her had sufficient remorse left in their hearts to call out that the Englishwoman was not to be hurt, that she went about doing good to every one. She was tended, and conveyed home.

In after times, with trembling hands and weeping eyes she read the sad, sad story contained in the packet. How strangely had her whimsical fancy operated on the fates of three beings! She herself had attained a purifying and philanthropical degree of knowledge in the sorrows and sufferings of humanity, which strengthened her faith and hope with the fervent aid of "good works." But Cynthia and Matthew Graham were desolated beings; and it is scarcely to be wondered at that a degree of painful regret often crept into Miss Beechthorne's bosom when she reflected on her youthful and capricious experiment.

Matthew had left England for Paris, where, by his skill as a workman, he obtained good employment. Through one of those slight offences, however, which then entailed political punishment, he was seized and incarcerated. Friendless and a foreigner, scarcely conscious of what he had done to incur his imprisonment, he remained hopeless and forlorn in confinement till the storming of the Bastille in 1789; then indeed he was free—

free to starve. Weak, and long unused to labour, what could he do? He wandered about for three years, gaining a subsistence as he best could; till, wretched as he was, he incurred the suspicion of the Republic, and fell a sacrifice with many others equally innocent. The packet contained, with the history of himself, a lock of brown hair—how obtained Belinda never knew, but which had once adorned her own brow. So had passed away the early dream of her youth. How many dreamers, like her, have awoke to sorrow and premature age!

She abated not one effort of usefulness to the world after that last grief. Repentance, indeed, added its sting to sorrow, but Peace was hers at the last; she had fought the good fight, and in time she overcame.—You may say there is no moral, reader, in this story. I say there is. Read it. Never do evil that good may come of it. In all deception there is danger.

If my kind readers have had patience to endure an old woman's gossipings so long, I am bounden in gracious duty to thank them for their favour and attention. Little Mary says she is quite ready to go on writing if I can remember any more curious tales to tell her, and perhaps some day I may indulge myself and her; for I think my memory can yet furnish a few records of strange family

matters. I do not pretend to have aimed at anything beyond the mere outlines of pictures, and I do not suppose any one will have gathered a vast deal of grand knowledge from the old Court Milliner's prosings; but if my poor doings have passed away an hour that might otherwise have hung heavily, Mistress Taffetas is amply rewarded, and with her very lowest courtesy bids her respected patrons a genial farewell.

THE END.

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